

DIALOGICAL COMMUNITY
ACTION

A PROFESSIONAL PROJECT
PRESENTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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MAY 1981

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This professional project, completed by

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ABSTRACT

The subject of this professional project is a means to empower citizen participation in decisions affecting their own lives called dialogical community action. A rationale for it is developed based on the insights of Abraham Maslow, Joel Aronoff, Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Erich Fromm, Paolo Freire, Alfred North Whitehead, David Ray Griffin, Gustavo Gutierrez, John Vincent and other thinkers.

The methodology used is a descriptive methodology. It surveys some of the major problems of our times that could be addressed by the maximum possible citizen participation in decisions affecting their lives. Then it looks at the history of citizen participation and possible foundations in the thinking of some social scientists and an educator.

A system is described for empowering citizen participation in decision making called dialogical community action followed by a theology of citizen participation.

The Project concludes with a discussion of how the Church should organize itself to properly use dialogical community action and fulfill its mission of world service.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The sleek, British jetliner circled the airport to get into position for its landing run. Far below, camouflage colored MIG fighters lined the runways. A large city loomed in the distance surrounded by the manicured fields of many farms. Within a few moments the airliner was rolling to a stop on the runway and its captain welcomed us to Zagreb, Yugoslavia in his crisp, British accent. We were quickly processed through customs where I learned the local authorities had sent a chauffeured car to transport me to my hotel near the University. I learned I was a guest of the government of Croatia and the City of Zagreb while participating in the International Conference on Citizen Participation and Local Government as the Mayor of the City of Simi Valley, California.

PERSONAL HISTORY

The story of how this Methodist preacher happened to be his city's representative at an international conference on citizen participation in Yugoslavia illustrates the serendipitous¹ character of history. As a youth I had dreams of what I wanted to do as an adult but they never included

¹Serendipity means - "an assumed gift for finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for."

being a Mayor of a city or taking part in such a conference. I energetically planned my career but few of the plans developed as I laid them. Twists and turns came in my career as I followed opportunities and now and then took partially informed "leaps" into the unknown.

One of the most exciting and anxiety producing of those "leaps" was my leaving the pastoral ministry in 1967 to "do theology". My first position was as a community organizer in delinquency and crime prevention for Los Angeles County. My initial assignment included the fabled Sunset Strip, an area of posh stores, restaurants and night clubs between Hollywood and Beverly Hills that was being invaded by thousands of wandering young people called "hippies". I worked with community organizations and other agency representatives to attempt to bring "peace" to the Strip in a setting that was leading to violent confrontation between contending forces. It was here I first practised the techniques of community organization and citizen participation.

It was here I also witnessed the difference a committed church could make in a potentially explosive situation if it was willing to follow its Lord in sacrificial service. The West Hollywood Presbyterian Church, its pastor, Dr. Ross Greek, and their Presbytery served the community in the finest tradition of the prophetic servant church in the face of police and other government harrassment, violence and even death threats. They opened the church to penniless young people who came by the thousands. When the

formal contributing membership shrunk to a fraction of its former size, the Presbytery stepped in to finance it as a mission. Dr. Greek became nationally known as the Vicar of Sunset Strip for his efforts to serve those in need. America was rocked by rebellion at the time. Hard line conservatives and radicals seemed aching for a violent confrontation. The word was out that the embattled Johnson administration was readying concentration camps for those who opposed its policies. The hippies were the epitome of that rebellion so they were the objects of a great deal of hostility by the "straight" society. Still the Church and Dr. Greek stood firm in their service to the wandering people. Their example mobilized other moderate groups who intervened to maintain a semblance of peace and provide humane responses to the "hippie" invasion.

Later, I was transferred to the suburban San Fernando Valley area of Los Angeles where I was exposed to a much different kind of community. Compared to the Sunset Strip it was very quiet. However, underneath that facade was much pain and suffering caused by drug abuse, alcoholism, alienation and crime. Particularly in the highly affluent areas of the San Fernando Valley, success came at a high price to family systems as the competitiveness that pays off in business permeated family structures. Many of their children wound up on the Strip and other places as runaways. I learned the suburbs needed help as much as the Strip did. Again, citizen participation techniques in tackling these

problems seemed the way to go so we used them extensively.

Then, I was promoted to my department's headquarters in downtown Los Angeles where I became one of the staff members of the Delinquency and Crime Commission. I was exposed to a much different kind of citizen participation which was the province of the rich and/or politically powerful. Jerry Brown was a member of that Commission a few years before he became California's governor. It was here I met Art Whizin, a highly successful businessman, who was pushing a massive citizen participation plan that would organize the whole County of Los Angeles around neighborhood action councils. He even proposed the plan to the federal government for use throughout the United States.

A few months later it became apparent that the issue of whether to incorporate as a city was going to get on the ballot in the communities that comprised Simi Valley. At 56,000 people and 26 square miles it would be one of the largest cities at incorporation in California's history. I had been Associate Pastor of the Methodist Church in one of those communities a few years earlier and still resided there. So I took another leap into the unknown and declared my candidacy for the new City Council that might emerge from the election. Thirty-six other candidates declared for the five seats. Most worked very hard for cityhood and their own elections. I ran on the slogan of "People Power" and the promise to share power with the people through a system of neighborhood councils if I was elected. I used the commu-

nity organization techniques I learned working for Los Angeles County and was coached by a friend who was a professional campaign organizer. I had virtually no money. I literally put my campaign in God's "hands" telling God I was responding to God's lure and if God wanted me to win it was up to God. I will have to admit I was amazed when I received the highest number of votes and had carried almost every precinct in the new city for one of the five seats! We missed the number of votes we were after by less than one percent. When the election was over I had spent \$635.00 in borrowed and contributed funds. At the first City Council meeting I was elected Mayor by my fellow councilmen.

I set out to keep my promises. Within one year our neighborhood councils became a reality. The whole city structure was organized around citizen participation and advocacy. We modeled new ways of delivering services including a new kind of police department. Most things worked well. Some did not and we dropped them. Recognition was fast in coming as we won award after award for our innovations. In 1971 our City Manager won top honors in the United States as City Manager of the Year for these innovations.

So, here I was in Zagreb, Yugoslavia participating in an international conference on "Citizen Participation and Local Government"! I discovered if anything is the "wave of the future", it is citizen participation in decisions affecting their own lives. Countries from almost every shade of

the political spectrum were represented at the conference - even fascist Spain! Some of the most radical representatives were from the United States. One did not have to be an elected official to attend. Representatives from some of the communist countries who talked with me considered the American radicals anarchists! We all were united in our distrust of the "technocrats" who increasingly threaten to dominate our lives. Most of us saw citizen participation as the way to take back the power that rightfully belongs to the citizens. The conference, therefore, was dedicated to detailing how that could be done.

I came home from the conference intensely aware that we had made only a tiny start in Simi Valley toward the kind of citizen participation that was needed. One of the critical problems that almost doomed the neighborhood council plan before it started was: How do you know when those who participate are truly representative of the citizens of a community? Studies cited at the Conference in fact demonstrated participants are usually not representative of the general population.²

This is the "Achilles Heel" of citizen participation. Since only a tiny percentage of the total population participates on any particular issue, this problem must be solved if citizen participation in decision making is to fulfill

²J. G. VanPutten (ed.) "Participation," Studies In Comparative Government, 5:2 (Winter, 1971).

its promise. This project specifically describes a system of participation that could eliminate this problem.

Some further pertinent comments on my personal history may be of some value in indicating my orientation. I was born at the height of the Great Depression as the first child of an Assemblies of God minister's family. One of his first churches was an abandoned saloon in the tiny community of Belt, Montana. Times were extremely hard. Often, the family's cash income was five dollars per month. We lived in a cabin on a local ranch and Dad "punched" cattle with the cowboys. He was a popular preacher and mother was an excellent pianist so they soon had calls to other churches. He was a traveling evangelist for a time and then accepted a call to the church in which he grew up in Seattle, Washington. Dad was appalled by what the Great Depression did to people, particularly the elderly who could not start over. He supported the Townsend Plan which was a radical plan for priming the economy with sizeable pensions for the elderly. Today I realize the foundations were being laid in my young life for concerns about social justice and the dignity of people. To supplement the family income in those pre-Second World War depression days, he worked part-time, first in a lumber mill and then as a window cleaner.

Soon, the Second World War erupted on the scene and rapidly changed things. Dad accepted a call to pastor a struggling Assembly of God Church in Kirkland, Washington, a suburb of Seattle. Since the church could not support the

family, he expanded his moon-lighting as a window cleaner into a full fledged building maintenance business and helped support the church. My teen years seemed relatively affluent as a result. When I was 18, Dad started me in my own building maintenance business to help pay my way through college.

When the church decided to build its own facilities (they had been meeting in a rented hall for years) they built it with volunteer labor - mostly his labor! This kind of dedicated service, without regard for financial gain, did more to commend his faith to me than all the sermons I heard him preach. Today I call this "doing theology". After a stint of military service, marriage and graduation from Northwest Bible College, I followed him into the ministry. By this time he was pastor of a prominent church in Wisconsin. My family and I followed him to that State where we started our pastoral work in Wittenberg, Wisconsin.

My first years in the ministry, I followed his prior example as a "worker priest" by working in secular positions while pastoring two small churches. Two years later, I decided my call was to full-time ministry so accepted an opportunity from The Methodist Church to go to Garrett Theological Seminary while serving as a full time supply pastor. Later I transferred to the School of Theology at Claremont, California for the last half of my seminary work and a student pastorate on the edge of East Los Angeles. Upon graduation, I was assigned to a church in the inner city of Honolulu,

Hawaii. I was exposed to the full gamut of urban problems in that parish. We developed a seven day a week social services - religious program that became a showcase for Methodist mission work. In the process we integrated Samoans with the old time Filipino church members. The resulting turbulence which threatened to explode into violence (but never did) displeased my Bishop so much I never was pastor-in-charge again of a church. This infuriated me because I knew we had done the right things. However, serendipity was at work. In less than three years I was "doing theology" full time as a community organizer and in another 2½ years was Mayor of Simi Valley. Without my Bishop's displeasure, these things would not have happened.

Following my stint as Mayor, I ran for Congress as the Democratic candidate for our area. I was soundly thrashed but serendipity was at work again. Immediately after the election I accepted the position of Director of the Ventura County Council on Drug Abuse. I have had the privilege of "doing theology" with hundreds of citizens in developing a response to the challenges posed by alcohol and other drug abuse. Even more important has been the opportunity to "do theology" with the modern "lepers of society" who are the epitome of Jesus' poor and oppressed whom he came to deliver. There are none who are poorer, or more oppressed, or more despised than drug abusers. They are an embarrassment to society because they are symptoms of our society's propensity for producing dysfunctional people in great numbers.

When we start probing the causes of drug abuse most of the ills of our society are exposed. It is no wonder the drug abuser is America's scapegoat! Yet Americans do not really want to do without the alcohol and other drug abusers because they contribute so much to the economy of the United States. Consider the hospitals that would close, the judgeships that would be lost, the law enforcement officers who would be unemployed without drug addicts and alcoholics! They are an important part of our consumptive life-style.

However, it is not enough to man life boat stations along the shores of America's life in attempts to rescue some of the victims of her storms. We must get at the cause of those storms so far fewer people will need the rescue services. This is a job for the people themselves. By now, we know no one else is going to do it for us. There is too much financial incentive to keep things as they are. But even if some very powerful special interests wanted to take action to remake America so it produced fewer dysfunctional people, they could not do so without the active participation of the people.

BASIC MYTHS THAT SHAPE MY COMMUNICATION

It is only fair to the reader that I recognize some of the basic "myths" that shape my communication. In this context I am using the term "myth" in a positive sense as means of communication that, while being human creations, share with drama, music, paintings, sculpture, prose and

poetry the ability to point toward other, more basic realities.

I have come to believe that reality, truth if you will, is mostly non-verbal. It is experience. It is events. It is happenings. It is existence. It is process. Words and concepts are human creations mythical in character, that only reflect on these basic non-verbal, non-intellectual events. Whitehead lends support to this thought when he says,

The rational satisfactions or dissatisfaction in respect to any particular happening depends upon an intuition which is capable of being universalized

This intuition is not the discernment of a form of words, but a type of character. It is characteristic of the learned mind to exalt words. Yet mothers can ponder many things in their hearts which their lips cannot express. These many things, which are thus known, constitute the ultimate religious evidence beyond which there is no appeal.³

I have been educated in several American institutions of higher education ranging from a charismatic bible college and secular universities to graduate theological seminaries. As a result, I am imbued with western democratic social, political, cultural, and economic myths alongside a variety of protestant Christian myths. I will not detail my years of academic struggle to comprehend the mysteries of the philosophers, theologians, ethicists, economists, political scientists, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, anthropologists, social-psychologists, biblical scholars, histor-

³Alfred North Whitehead, Religion In The Making (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p.65.

ians, architects, planners, ecologists, managers, social workers, writers, critics, physicians and others to whom I have been exposed in the process of pursuing my education. However, as a result of this exposure to many different kinds of thinkers, I have come to some tentative vantage points and conclusions regarding what the human experience is all about, where that experience is going and how God is related to it all.

With the political theologians, including liberation theologians, I believe the primary purpose of God's activity is to "make all things new", particularly to free oppressed people everywhere.⁴ God is a future giving God who acts in serendipitous ways in giving that future.

With some of the process theologians I believe constant change is the order of things as the result of God's future giving activity. I accept their metaphysical view of the world as the most up-to-date metaphysics available.⁵ I am particularly impressed with Daniel Day Williams statements about God and the role of love in the cosmos in his book, The Spirit and the Forms of Love. Williams, in common with some other process theologians such as John B. Cobb, Jr.

⁴See Luke 4:18-21 which describes Jesus' call to preach.

⁵Metaphysics means - "the science which seeks to discover the general ideas which are indispensably relevant to the analysis of everything that happens."

and David Ray Griffin, posits a suffering, responsive God. He follows Alfred North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne's beliefs that all reality draws from the absolute structures and forms which are included in God's primordial nature and that all entities which make up actual reality or concrescence have the freedom to choose various ways of responding to this lure. The result is they usually choose less than the best response. God draws into God's self all these competing imperfect experiences and transforms them through God's resulting suffering. This becomes new, creative input to the cosmos as God continually lures it on to greater possibilities. I believe this is what literally sustains the cosmos, moment by moment.

The cosmos has not achieved what it shall achieve in the future. It is in the process of becoming. Creation is still continuing and love is at the very center of its processes. There is no automatic advance guaranteed for the cosmos over a particular time frame, but over the long reaches of time the evidence is over-whelming, at least to this writer, that great advances have been made as judged by increasingly complex forms with their capacity for increased enjoyment of existence.

Cobb says:

It is God who so orders possibility as to render it into a relevant lure for each new experience. In experiencing the ideal possibility for realization

we are experiencing God.⁶

With the liberation theologians and John Vincent, I believe what the former call "praxis theology" and Vincent calls "doing theology" is absolutely essential if our theology is to be genuine. God's mighty revealing acts are actions! God led the children of Israel out of Egypt and performed mighty acts that saved them. Later, they reflected on these events and what they meant.

"The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us "

We have been reflecting ever since on this Event and its meaning. The most profound influences on our individual and corporate lives, when we stop to think about them, are non-verbal experiences or happenings. Words can illuminate these experiences and even be the catalysts of their happening again in our own or other people's lives as happens when people read the Scriptures. But the words are empty without the experience. The spoken or written word always follows the doing. The concept of praxis reminds us both action and reflection must be held together if we are to approximate truth.

I believe with Vincent that "Jesus does not come to reveal God - he comes to reveal the world in which he claims

⁶John B. Cobb, Jr., "Spiritual Discernment in a Whiteheadian Perspective." in Harry James Cargas and Bernard Lee (eds.) Religious Experience and Process Theology (New York: Paulist Press, 1976), pp. 349-367.

God has hidden himself".⁷

Also, . . . the basic theology of Jesus is an attempt to say that God is where Jesus is, and that Jesus is what he is doing in the place where he stands alongside me.⁸

Again, Vincent says,

It is important to see the whole Jesus pattern as the way of wholeness and significance, and not just parts of it.⁹

. . . As a whole, all elements together create a new life story, a new vocation, as well as a new life-style, for the disciple.¹⁰

Thus, every Jesus story begins with incarnation - getting where people are, living with them, sharing their lot. It goes on to healing ministry - listening to what people's real needs are, being the patient washer of feet or cleaner of streets or brewer of tea. It then with love and care, not breaking the bruised reed, will seek to lift out into the light that points, people, groups, happenings, which bring love, healing, acceptance or significance; the ministry of parables. Then perhaps there will be specific actions; not great actions, but small, meaningful, planned, strategic actions, which are acted parables, prophetic signs, imaginative instances, which can liberate old elements in the situation and hold up new possibilities. But all this will throw up and confirm the disciple group; it will force them together and necessitate a discipline and a corporate mutual reliance. And perhaps there will be "polarization", conflict, the parting of ways, new alliances with strange bedfellows; the cross. And the cross is also the loneliness of the vicarious initiator, who "does his thing" because it is "everybody's". Then, finally, there might be signs of resurrection, as the deed catches on, or the new style evokes response, or the group is thrilled with a momentary success, or the disciple experiences the joy of the resurrection. And occasionally, within the battles of history, he sees the parousia, the ultimate triumph of

⁷John Vincent, The Jesus Thing, (Nashville: Abingdon Press 1973), p.59.

⁸Ibid., p.62. ⁹Ibid., p.86. ¹⁰Ibid.

the way.¹¹

I agree with Vincent "that this theology is Christianity."

This describes what I believe God is doing. Now I will describe what I believe this is all about and where it is headed.

Whitehead claims "enjoyment" is the purpose behind everything.

Since God's consequent nature experiences everything experienced by the entities of the cosmos, God experiences this "enjoyment." Whitehead includes prehension or unconscious experience in the term and claims all kinds of energy events experience enjoyment and not just human ones. The more complex entity has a greater capacity for enjoyment. Therefore, we see through the aeons of time the emergence of more and more complex forms. Humankind, at least on earth, is the crowning achievement of this process. Human capacity for enjoyment far exceeds that of other complex forms thus contributing more to God's enjoyment than other forms. Because of this, when choices have to be made between less complex and more complex forms, the more complex forms have a higher value to the cosmos and should ordinarily be chosen.

I believe all this is headed, in Biblical language, toward the "new heavens and new earth" to be created by God

¹¹Ibid., p.86-87.

at the end of time. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin uses different language to describe the development of humankind to a somewhat comparable "omega point". Paolo Soleri, the philosopher-architect-builder of futuristic cities, provides intriguing models for how to fulfill Chardin's dream using our vast technological abilities to humanize rather than dehumanize humankind through complexification. The world-wide citizen participation movement is developing methods to harness the talents and energies of our world's citizens in fulfilling such dreams.

However, the Bible warns us that progress toward such goals is dangerous and full of setbacks. Griffin advises us that,

there is a correlation among the following dimensions of experience: (1) the capacity for intrinsic good; (2) the capacity for intrinsic evil; (3) the capacity for instrumental good; (4) the capacity for instrumental evil; (5) the power for self-determination. The correlation among these dimensions of experience is positive, meaning that if any one of them increases, the others also proportionally increase. Further, the correlation is necessary rather than contingent.¹²

This means the farther humankind advances toward Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's "omega point" or toward the "new heavens and earth" the greater the dangers are because of humankind's vastly expanded powers. The capacity for good, evil and self-determination move in necessary correlation with each other. This surely illuminates the source of the

¹²John B. Cobb, Jr. and David Ray Griffin, Process Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p.71.

dangers of our own age and gives special meaning to Jesus' words "that except those days be shortened, no flesh will be saved." The saving word here is that those days will be shortened. God is a participant, in fact, the decisive participant, in all this. Whether God is working through Soleri's arcologies or through any other human response to God's lure to the future which God is giving us to advance us to the omega point and the new heavens and earth, God is the decisive participant, shortening the days, redeeming us from evil, struggling with us as the human species tortuously advances toward the grand consummation! Another saving word derived from process theology is the purpose of these processes is enjoyment of existence enlightened by hope in the grand consummation. God enjoys through the enjoyments of God's creation; God also suffers through the suffering of that creation. In a sense reminiscent of Albert Camus both enjoyment and suffering are cosmically transmuted into enjoyment of existence. In some way, God also redeems all the deficient responses of God's created entities thus ensuring their survival. I believe this vision can be shared by most Christians without violating the rest of their beliefs. The advantage of holding this vision is it describes an over-all goal toward which most who follow Jesus are moving. From this goal we can then develop common strategies to meet our here and now situations.

WHAT THIS PROJECT IS

The purpose of this Project is to develop a system

of community analysis and action which can be used by the Church to further its mission to the world. I will show how this system is grounded in Christian thought and insights from psychology and education as expressed by Abraham Maslow, Joel Aronoff, Erich Fromm and Paulo Freire. I will use a descriptive methodology to achieve this purpose.

WHAT THIS PROJECT IS NOT

This Project is not a discourse on the social, economic, political and ecological problems of our time although it will refer to some of these problems since Dialogical Community Action can have a profound effect on them. Nor is it a treatise on political theology although it makes such statements as part of its rationale for why the Church should use Dialogical Community Action to fulfill part of its mission to the world. It is not a comprehensive statement about citizen participation in decision making. It presupposes the value of maximum feasible citizen participation in decision making in the United States of America or any other society that claims to be a democracy. It concentrates on developing a system for involving a local community's citizens in its decision making processes while insuring that a representative cross section of the community has made its inputs and feedbacks into the problems.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am indebted to many people for the insights in this

project. Some are anonymous and I do not remember others. Those of whom I am conscious are: My colleagues and supervisors in the Los Angeles County Department of Community Services, particularly Sterling Boyer and Dave Bisnc; the citizens of the West Hollywood Community Coordinating Council and the Federation of Community Coordinating Councils of Los Angeles County during the 1967-68 period I have described; the citizen-members of the West San Fernando Valley Community Inquiry and the experts who advised them; Dr. Ross Greek, his Presbytery and those members of the West Hollywood Presbyterian Church who worked with him during the 1967 crisis on the Sunset Strip; various individual "Hippies" and "Hippie" groups, some of who exemplified the positive ideals of the "flower children" of love, non-violence, and peaceful co-existence with others while being true to their own drumbeat; Art Whizin; Jim Strong; Bruce Altman; my fellow City Council members - Jim Dougherty, Dick Ostler, Howard Rogo, David Sigmund, and later, Jim Smith and Howard Marohn; the conferees at the world conference on Citizen Participation and Local Government held in Zagreb, Yugoslavia in 1971; the churches and directors of the Ventura County Council of Churches; the members, directors, staff and consultants of the Ventura County Council on Drug Abuse; the good citizens of Simi Valley; and my father and mother.

Others of particular influence have been: Sarah Kalinor, my supervisor and confidant while working on the Sunset Strip; Herb Oberman; Larry Margolis; Doyle Shields,

the founder of Agape Therapy; and Caesar Julian, M.D., Medical Director of the Ventura County Council on Drug Abuse, a co-founder of that organization, major patron, and a co-worker on many of its projects.

I am also indebted to the faculty and staff at the School of Theology at Claremont for their insights, particularly Joseph Hough; Ignacio Casturera; John B. Cobb, Jr; Howard J. Clinebell, Jr.; David Ray Griffin, Harvey Seifert; and visiting professors or lecturers Willard "Buzz" Stevens, Paolo Soleri, and John Vincent.

None of this would have been possible without the cooperation of my wife, and co-worker, Darlene.

It is to her I dedicate this Project.

CHAPTER II

SOME PROBLEMS THAT CONFRONT HUMANITY THAT
MAY BE LESSENER BY CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN
DECISION MAKING

Shortly before he died, E. P. Schumacher, the well known English economist who wrote Small is Beautiful, spoke at a conference on "Economics and a Sense of the Possible" which was sponsored by the School of Theology at Claremont. He claimed immense problems are roaring down on humanity from many different directions at once. In fact he claimed the situation is so serious it will take "a break-through a day to keep the disasters away" unless we drastically change course.¹ These threatened problems range from overwhelming pollution of the environment to mass starvation and epidemics on a scale never before witnessed by humankind.

Citizen participation in decision making must be one of the key parts of any efforts mounted to cope with these problems. I doubt the human race will choose to commit mass suicide if it is aware of what threatens its continued survival and if it has effective decision making powers to take the necessary action.

¹This was stated in a speech he made at a conference at the School of Theology at Claremont titled, "Theology, Economics and A Sense Of The Possible", which was held February 24-26, 1977.

CREATION OF NON-SUSTAINABLE SOCIETIES

Humankind's number one problem, in my estimation, is we have created non-sustainable societies² by over dependence on consumption of non-renewable resources that ultimately will be used up and that result in death dealing pollution. Even if we were to find some way to "fool mother nature" into yielding the energy we need from heat generating, energy releasing processes, the resulting thermal pollution may make earth uninhabitable for human beings.³ It seems inevitable that industrialized societies will have to drastically change their consumptive life styles. The question is will they use the few years that are left to do so in rational ways or will they greedily pursue their present ways until it is too late to take constructive action? This obviously implies the "under-developed" portion of the world is pursuing a "will o' the wisp" they will never achieve if they attempt to copy the industrialized world's development policies. We must rapidly transform our economies into sustainable economies by switching to the use of renewable resources and the recycling of non-renewable resources. Fortunately, we have barely scratched the surface of these possibilities. In addition, we can drastically increase the

²Robert L. Stivers, The Sustainable Society (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976).

³Robert L. Heilbroner, An Inquiry Into The Human Prospect (New York: Norton, 1974).

quality and longevity of our industrial products thus cutting down on the quantities needed. Even more important, Paolo Soleri has shown the way to new human environments in his arcologies which would drastically cut our use of non-renewable resources and the resulting pollution by eliminating the automobile from such cities and making them much more energy efficient.⁴

INDIVIDUAL AND CORPORATE VIOLENCE

The creation of non-sustainable societies is directly related to the next important problem facing humankind which is individual and corporate violence. This violence has many faces ranging from individual acts to modern total warfare. It often is not immediately recognized as violence, as when social and economic institutions result in malnutrition with its insidious effects on children. It can be as genocidal to turn a people's food producing lands into plantations producing industrial raw materials for export as to put the people in gas ovens. It is a fact that current food shortages are the result of political, economic and cultural decisions and not the result of nature's limitations. Existing technology could produce enough food to feed several times the world's present population given the proper political, economic and cultural environment. However, a re-

⁴Paolo Soleri, Arcology: The City In the Image of Man (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1969).

distribution of decision making powers will have to take place before this can happen.

OPPRESSION

A common theme that emerges, as we analyze these problems, is oppression: Oppression of individual human beings by other human beings; oppressive political, cultural and economic systems and institutions; and oppression of weaker political jurisdictions at the hands of more powerful political jurisdictions. Much of this oppression has been unintentional. In fact, some of humanity's noblest inspirations have unwittingly resulted in some of its worst oppressions. Much past "charity" has been in this category as recipients were robbed of their human dignity and power to name their own world.⁵ We have usually failed to see the oppression resulting from much modern invention because it has simultaneously provided a wealth of material goods. However, a visit to the slums of any large city anywhere in the world will provide ample evidence of this oppression as rural families have been pushed off their farms by their inability to compete with farm machinery. This is proceeding at an even faster pace as the result of cybernation (the wedding of computers and machines) making workers increasingly insignificant in producing material goods. What do

⁵Paulo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Seabury Press, 1970).

displaced workers do to earn their livings? Do they have any rights to the productivity of these automated machines?

ALIENATION

Is it any wonder alienation has become such a widespread phenomenon in highly industrialized countries? Masses of people have come to realize they are expendable, that they would never be missed if they disappeared. In fact, they realize their death would make it easier on those who survive because there would be one less person with whom to share the resources. Too many people have developed "outsider" complexes. They do not feel they belong in their own societies or, sometimes, in their own families. The experience of most Americans is they have to fight their way into acceptance and a place in their society's structures. The competition is fierce and many do not make it.

LACK OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

We give lip service to equal opportunity for all Americans but, in fact, most do not have equal opportunity, for some, in Orwell's famous words, "are more equal than others".⁶ The poor, minorities of all kinds, women, the aged, the young are discriminated against in many ways. Humankind has a heavy streak of "yahooism" in it as Jonathan Swift reminded us in Gulliver's Travels. We find so many

⁶George Orwell, Animal Farm (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1946).

ways to foul our own nests and oppress ourselves. The oppressor is oppressed just as are those he oppresses. We oppress each other in social and family systems.⁷ This leads to individual and group dysfunction such as alcohol and other drug abuse, mental illness, delinquency and crime. In our search for economic opportunity we Americans move around our vast country more than any other people in history. This contributes to family and social instability and feelings of alienation.

As a result of these problems, we need to work hard at making people feel they belong. Citizen participation in decision is one important way of making this happen.

ECONOMIC INSECURITY

There are many other problems facing us. In spite of the general affluence of Americans, their economic well being can be easily threatened by catastrophic illness, layoffs and volatile changes in economic fashions. We have rapidly become financially dependent people. Whereas we once were a nation of independent farmers, tradesmen and business people, today most of us are employed by someone else. Owner managed farms and businesses contribute only a tiny part of our gross national product. Real free enterprise is practised in only a small part of our economy. Even home ownership is being threatened by our inflationary times

⁷Virginia Satir, People Making (Palo Alto, Ca: Science and Behaviour Books, 1972).

so increasingly people are highly dependent on others.

UNCOORDINATED SOCIAL PROGRAMMING

In our attempts to correct some of our social problems we have added piece after piece of uncoordinated social programs that conflict with each other to the point some seem to do more harm than good - and at great cost. We have hesitated to implement a full scale, efficient, planned society which would seek to rationalize our systems and reduce system dysfunction. The result may be worse than taking no action at all. At least then the people would be under no illusions about their situations and could act on their own behalfs.

INADEQUATE HEALTH CARE

In spite of spending more on health care than any other people on earth, we still have inadequate care for many people. We keep tinkering with inadequate health delivery systems that emphasize costly treatment over prevention and succeed only in enriching the deliverers of health services.

DETERIORATED URBAN ENVIRONMENTS

Our urban environments are badly deteriorated in our older cities. Still we tinker with them instead of creating radically new, modern cities such as Soleri is designing.

POOR EDUCATION

Our educational institutions are likewise perfor-

ming very poorly. People are not getting the level of education they need for today's world. We still separate academic life from the world of action. To keep action informed and theory relevant they must be united in praxis. That is not generally the way education works in America. The result is the irrelevance of much education to American life.

INFLATION

Inflation compounds our financial insecurity while enriching some speculators. This is particularly cruel in the area of housing. It makes a mockery of thrift and encourages a spendthrift attitude among people who spend before their currency drops further in value.

STATE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF OPPRESSION

Some have come to see that the modern state, while masquerading as a benevolent father to all its people, is actually an instrument of oppression manipulated by one class against the rest of the classes ruled by the State.⁸ Marxists are very open about their "dictatorship of the proletariat" being rule by the working class for the working class. Even then most Marxist countries are ruled by a managerial and professional elite who are the very essence of "technocrats." They tend to be little different from the technocrats in both our so-called private and public institutions

⁸Albert Jay Nock, Our Enemy: The State (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Press, 1950).

who have used their skills as highly trained specialists to expropriate rights of the owners and citizens. The technocrats have over-centralized decision making and generally made things much more complicated than they need be. They have worshipped technology to the point it is in a runaway situation that threatens humanity itself.

ARMS RACE

One prime example of technology out of control is the arms race. Humankind has become progressively less secure as we have increased our military might. Few nations really need the military forces they have yet we do not seem to know how to turn off our arms making machinery! Since each side will do its best to keep up with or get ahead of the other side, all we do is increase our chances of a world holocaust by mistake. This reduces our security - and at great cost. Military-industrial complexes are extremely powerful in all of the leading countries. Something must be done to bring them under control of the people for the people have everything to lose by the situation.

MATERIALISM

Much of our malaise is the result of emphasizing material values at the expense of social, cultural and spiritual values. We need to beat our Mercedes and Cadillacs into plowshares along with many of our instruments of war. We need to create cities that are great aesthetic statements

that can shape the human experience as it surges toward tomorrow's omega point.

THREATS TO CLOSE OFF HISTORY

We must resist all efforts to sell humankind's magnificent future for a here and now technological mess of pottage⁹ that closes history to further development. This is the threat from the uncontrolled technological biases of both the Western democracies and the Eastern communistic states. Both offer a way to material abundance at the price of our liberties. If we but bow down to the god of technology, as interpreted by its priestly class of technocrats, all our material wants may be taken care of. But, as Erich Fromm reminds us, the price is robotism, slavery and no hope for the future.¹⁰

HOPELESSNESS

Hopelessness is the final consequence of slavery. It leads to despair and despair leads to death.

Power must be seized again, by the people. When they learn their true situation, they will choose life.¹¹

⁹Genesis 25:29-34 (Where Esau sells his birthright).

¹⁰Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (New York: Rinehart, 1955), pp.357-63.

¹¹Saul Alinsky, Reveille for Radicals (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp.66,67.

CHAPTER III

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

Citizen participation in decision making is the involvement of people affected by a decision in the making of that decision. This is easy to understand when only two people are involved in a decision that affects only them. It becomes extremely complex when high level decisions are involved affecting people around the world. The latter involves much different kinds of participatory mechanisms, obviously, than the former. But the essence remains the same: Those affected participate some way in the decision making process.

Much participation is hidden and people are often unaware how they have participated in making their decisions. In fact, this is the most common form of participation in decision making. It is present when we spend money on one thing and not on another. Usually, such participation is not organized, but when it is it can be a very powerful form of decision making as the United Farm Workers have demonstrated with their boycotts. To be effective, hidden participation needs to be raised to the level of consciousness and organized to achieve a particular goal. Otherwise, it is random in its effect or subject to manipulation by special interest groups who discover and use it for their own purposes such as is done by Madison Avenue advertising agencies.

There is the phenomenon of "armchair participation" which is particularly hidden. It is, however, very potent as many a would be politician has learned to his/her sorrow! The immense influence of television has greatly expanded this kind of participation with its ability to transmit information from all over the world into every home with a television receiver. Armchair participants talk with each other about issues and make up their minds on things, usually without the benefit of formal participatory mechanisms. Their decisions will show up in the voting booths, where they choose to live and send their children to school, how they spend their money, and the like. Again, this type of participation is seldom organized although all kinds of special interests attempt to find out where it is headed and either manipulate it or align themselves with it. Of course, in a country the size of the United States there seldom is any one direction it is going so all kinds of studies are done to figure out what segment of the population is going where!

HISTORY OF FORMS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The essence of democracy is citizen participation in decision making. Democracies have attempted to formalize such decision making more than other systems of government. However, most governmental systems have had forms of citizen participation in the way they actually governed.

The beginnings of citizen participation in decision making are lost in antiquity. We can only speculate on what

it might have been like in prehistorical societies. For most of human history it has been highly informal. When I was in Yugoslavia, I learned that was the way things got done there for several hundred years under the rule of the Turkish Empire. If anything was to be done collectively, the people had to band together to do it themselves since the formal government was too remote and was not about to do anything for them.

The ancient Greeks were the first in recorded history to try formalized citizen participation in decision making in operating the City of Athens. Even that experiment was extremely limited by today's standards since they severely limited who was a citizen. In fact, most of the residents of Athens were not citizens. When citizen participation in decision making died out it was a long time in reappearing. In fact, it was like an ice-berg thawing. Participation in governmental decision making was slowly expanded over the centuries to various elites.

It was not until the opening up of the "new world" to colonization that necessity, caused by the vast distances from established government, allowed formal participation in decision making to reappear in the New England Town Meetings. At first, it was extremely limited as in Athens. In fact, it is only in the twentieth century that full citizenship has been extended to women, blacks and indians. Formalized citizen participation in decision making is, therefore, essentially a phenomenon of the last 400 years of human history.

It has grown ever stronger since its reemergence in New England so that even many countries ruled by authoritarian governments support the idea albeit in different ways from the Western democracies.

The late nineteenth and twentieth centuries have seen spectacular growth in the Western democracies, particularly the United States. It is hard to believe the United States was a "developing" country up until the Civil War with great disparities between its citizens and those of the "developed" countries of Western Europe. It emerged from that War as one of the strongest military powers on earth and raced into economic development that dwarfed anything in past history. Formal citizen participation in decision making had flourished in the small towns and villages that comprised America before the Civil War. In spite of extension of the right to vote to all adults, it languished badly in the large urban centers that mushroomed up in various parts of the United States. Where, in our more innocent years, citizen participation worked almost automatically in our smaller communities, today, we have to work intensely on formalized structures to make it happen in our large cities. It is vital that it continue to happen, and be greatly expanded, if our democracy is to survive. Signs of alienation of our citizens from their communities are too wide-spread to ignore. People have come to believe they are lost in our huge cities; that they do not belong; that they would never be missed if they were gone. Most of

the time they are right! Even the most important among us would barely cause our system a skipped heart beat when they die.

Such size can be dehumanizing for those who must be a part of it. Part of bringing our monstrous megalopolises to human scale is to design their decision making processes so their citizens can be involved in the decisions affecting their own lives. One gets the terrifying feeling that no one is in control of our largest cities; that a demonic element has come to life with their complicatedness and size that none of our current systems are able to control. More and more we are sensing this element is anti-human and machine oriented. It sucks more and more of our world's resources into its maelstrom and spews out all kinds of anti-human results.

Formalized citizen participation in decision making is vital to regaining control over our megalopolises and making their citizens feel like human beings again. Such participation will not happen automatically as it once did in our small communities. Substantial resources will have to be committed to mechanisms to make it work such as the hiring of expert citizen advocates to catalyze and service the mechanisms. We must recognize that whatever we design for mass communities will have to use a mix of direct and representative participation in order to function. Much of the structure needed in the United States is already in place because of our constitutions, representative systems of gov-

ernment and judicial systems. What is missing - and is desperately needed - is grass roots citizen participation in all areas of our communal lives. All of us are responsible for the situation our megalopolises are in for we have enthusiastically embraced what they have provided. In some ways, we have become one gigantic megalopolis, if we look at classic definitions of the city, in that we are all interrelated in one gigantic web of relationships and no one megalopolis can survive on its own without the others. If there were pockets of isolation from these relationships, the last 40 years of universal radio and television coverage of the world has so ended that isolation that even the residents of the remotest farmhouse share the attitudes and values of megalopolis. Since we are all responsible for the situations our megalopolises are in, we must all be involved in solving their problems. The experts cannot do it by themselves if for no other reason then they must have the peoples' cooperation in implementing their solutions.

MODERN FORMS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

Formal citizen participation in decision making takes many forms in the United States. It ranges from neighborhood councils organized by local government to citizen advisory councils on various subjects at the federal level. Some of the most effective in recent years have been lobbying groups such as the Sierra Club and Common Cause. However, proponents of formalized citizen participation are

leery of such groups because of their similarity to special interest groups and the constant danger that they will become special interests. This is true of any citizen's group not formally linked to the governmental decision making process whether it be a self-appointed community action organization or a home owners' group. This is not to say these groups are of no value. They are one important type of the democratic process and serve valuable, constitutionally protected roles. But they do not adequately fill the need for formalized citizen participation.

Formal citizen participation needs to be linked with governmental decision making processes. Its leaders need to be appointed by elected representatives of the people or be directly elected by the people they represent. When they speak, everyone needs to know they truly represent what their people want. Ideally, self-appointed community action organizations, Sierra Clubs, home owner groups, Common Cause groups and the like should participate in the formalized process when it is available.

Currently, few communities have developed formal citizen participation mechanisms that reach into their "grass roots". Usually the closest we come to such participation is in the smaller cities with their citizen commissions appointed by the elected city officials. A few, such as Simi Valley, Oxnard, and Ventura County, California have created neighborhood councils to get closer to the "grass roots". Even these have not yet committed the resources to do the

level of job needed. Nor have they gone the next step to break up the decision making processes so that each piece affects fewer people and makes "grass roots" decision making more possible.

One of the promising areas of citizen participation in decision making is the increasing number of business firms that have turned to participatory management to run their organizations. Some have incorporated employee profit sharing plans into their participatory systems. Now and then one hears of companies that actually sell the companies to their employees thus turning them into workers' cooperatives. Producer cooperatives have been around some time in the agricultural sector. Another promising area is the development of consumer cooperatives. All types of cooperatives need to be vastly expanded if they are to expand citizen participation in economic decision making.

One question that always rises in discussions of citizen participation in decision making is "just how far should such decision making go?" Obviously, everyone cannot be involved in all decisions that affect their lives. We would not want to be so involved. Some decisions are just too unimportant or too technical. For example, all I care is the lights go on at an affordable cost when I throw a switch or that the water flows when I turn a faucet. However, I want participatory mechanisms available so I can be involved in any decisions effecting my life if I want to be! During the meantime I am more than happy to elect some-

one to represent me in overseeing such matters and/or hiring technical people to run things.

Obviously participation in decision making does not mean control of decision making. Some people are unenthusiastic about citizen participation in decision making because they tried it and did not get their way! Citizen participation in decision making merely brings more people into the process, people who usually have not been heard from under previous systems of decision making. It still operates within a society's legal and political systems. Just because I have been heard does not mean my view will prevail.

It is important to separate policy decision making from administrative decision making. Policy decisions rightfully belong to the people and when the issue is too large and too complex, to their elected representatives. Administrative decision making belongs to the technocrats as they implement policy decisions. An example of policy decision making is the people, or their representatives, deciding that a new highway should be built and the route it should follow. Administrative decision making is the technocrat deciding how it is to be built.

LIMITATIONS AND SHORT COMINGS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The short comings of citizen participation are many. It can involve large numbers of people making it very unwieldy and strangling action. It can be parochial in its outlook. It is limited by the educational level of its citi-

zens and by their cultural readiness for it. Abraham Maslow discovered in applying his insights to business management that fearful people are threatened by participatory structures.¹ Certain kinds of participatory mechanisms can be manipulated by minorities.

However, the worst problem is apathy. Most people do not participate in formal community decision making. Saul Alinsky claimed only five to seven percent participation from a community in his best People's Organizations.² Even that is extremely high. Destination 90, a highly publicized community planning effort in the San Fernando Valley area of the City of Los Angeles, found only one tenth of one percent of the population took part in the processes! Involvement that does take place is inconsistent and spotty. However, we cannot conclude the public is not interested. The press and other media let people know what is happening. People talk about it over coffee breaks, at cocktail parties, on the job, even over the backyard fence. The critical need is to find ways for the formal participation process to plug into this informal network of participation. In not too many years, citizens will have the practical ability in urban areas to give instantaneous feedback on community issues by using the two way communications capability of the

¹Frank G. Goble, The Third Force (New York: Grossman, 1950), p.94.

²Saul Alinsky, Reveille for Radicals (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946).

coaxial cable being used to provide cable television. However, that will still not solve the problem of knowing whether or not the results are representative of the people since not all people will have access to coaxial cable nor will all respond.

STRENGTHS OF CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

The strengths of citizen participation in decision making, when it is properly executed, are: 1. The problem of knowing whether or not feedback from a citizen participation process is truly representative of the people can be solved by using periodic scientific random sampling as described later in this Project. 2. Greater community energy is released, particularly if the people's recommendations are followed, since the people who must support a plan of action are involved in developing it. 3. Technocratic decisions will be strengthened by having adequate feedback, from those who must live with the decisions, about how they are being affected. It is a tragic waste of resources, for example, to spend millions of dollars on poorly designed urban housing only to discover it increases crime and delinquency rather than decreasing it as hoped. Too much city planning has not had adequate feedback from those who must live with its results. If the people affected had been queried and listened to, the tragic mistakes would have been greatly reduced. 4. The essence of democracy is citizen participation in decisions that affect their own lives. If

we believe in democracy we must do all in our power to expand citizen participation in decision making affecting their own lives. This leads to healthier people as demonstrated by Joel Aronoff in the analysis of certain West Indies people described later in this Project.³ He demonstrated that those who had a measure of control over their own destinies were healthier in every way than those who did not.

5. Citizen participation in decision making encourages people to do things for themselves rather than rely on others to do things for them. All societies need self-actualizing people. Citizen participation is an important way to develop such people. 6. Citizen participation in decision making will tend to humanize our societies because the input of citizens will more adequately reflect their needs and aspirations.

³Joel Aronoff, Psychological Needs and Cultural Systems (New York: Van Nostrand, 1967).

CHAPTER IV
INSIGHTS FROM MASLOW, ARONOFF, FROMM AND FREIRE
RELATING TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN
DECISION MAKING

Western civilization has generated a great deal of knowledge about how individual human beings and their societies function. The accumulation of this knowledge is seeming to proceed at an ever faster pace. If even a fraction of all we know were to be humanistically implemented in our social, economic and political institutions, all people throughout the world could experience much better lives. The question is how to implement what we know?

Vastly increased citizen participation in decision making is the answer. It needs to be greatly expanded if implementation of our knowledge is to take place. In this chapter I will explore the thinking of four people who have much to say about healthy societies and how to produce fully human people. Their findings provide strong support for citizen participation in decisions affecting their lives.

MASLOW'S INSIGHTS

Citizen participation in decision making has been given considerable impetus by the findings of "Third Force Psychology". Abraham Maslow created this name "to distinguish his work and that of others from the two other major

theories of human behavior (Freudianism and Behaviorism). . ."
 This . . . "theory is centered on man himself--his needs,
 his goals, his achievements, his success."¹

Third Force psychologies have been much more optimistic about the nature of human beings and their possibilities than have Freudianism and Behaviorism.

Maslow sparked the birth of Third Force Psychology, or humanistic psychology as some call it, with his book, Motivation and Personality, which was published in 1954.

Goble says about some of Maslow's ideas expressed in this book,

It is Maslow's belief that one cannot understand mental illness until one understands mental health. Not only Freud, but Hamilton, Hobbes, and Schopenhauer, reached their conclusions about human nature by observing the worst rather than the best of man. Positive aspects of human behavior such as happiness, joy, contentment, peace of mind, satisfaction, fun, play, well-being, elation, and ecstasy have been ignored by scientists, as have such positive qualities as kindness, generosity and friendship. Scientific emphasis has been placed on man's shortcomings, and little or no consideration has been given to his strengths and potentials.²

Maslow said,

If one is preoccupied with the insane, the neurotic, the psychopath, the criminal, the delinquent, the feeble-minded, one's hopes for the human species becomes perforce more and more modest, more and more 'realistic', more and more scaled down, one expects less and less from people . . . it becomes more and more clear that the study of the crippled, stunt-

¹Frank G. Goble, The Third Force (New York: Grossman, 1950), p.xii.

²Ibid., p.14.

ed, immature, and unhealthy specimens can yield only a cripple psychology and a cripple philosophy. The study of self-actualizing people must be the basis for a more universal science of psychology.³

It is this concept that makes Maslow's theory unique. He has studied the very best human beings he could find, causing him to conclude,

"What is happening now is a change in the image of man. From the philosophy of human nature that people have tucked away in their bones everything follows . . . In the case of the humanistic and Third Force image, which shows so clearly that we have been selling human nature short throughout the whole of recorded history, this is certainly . . . a revolution in terms of its consequences. It can and will change the world and everything in it."⁴

This view is clearly in much closer accord with Whitehead's view of the Consequent Nature of God luring creation toward the highest possibilities and the Christian belief that we look not upon people as they are, but as they can be when redeemed by Christ. Negative views of human beings have always been the instruments of oppression and have resulted in self-fulfilling prophecies. Maslow believed that when the needs of human beings are met their personalities flower and humanity's higher virtues thrive in their lives.

Maslow went far beyond previous theorists in attributing various ideals to human needs. He describes these

³Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York: Harper & Row, 1970), p.180.

⁴Goble (Which Goble says was stated by Maslow in a personal letter to him dated September 11, 1968.)

needs as physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, self-actualization needs, the desire to know and to understand, aesthetic needs and growth needs.⁵

He created a hierarchy of needs and claimed that it was necessary for a lower need in the hierarchy to be met before a higher need could emerge until the level of growth needs is reached. All the growth needs are of equal importance.

Goble says,

Closely related to individual motivation are the environmental or social conditions in the society. Among the conditions prerequisite to basic need satisfaction, Maslow lists such conditions as freedom to speak, freedom to do what one wishes as long as no harm is done to others, freedom of inquiry, freedom to defend oneself, justice, honesty, fairness, and order. Threats to these preconditions evoke a reaction from the individual similar to that evoked by threats to the basic needs themselves.⁶

Later Maslow added the precondition of "challenge" to the external environment.⁷

Maslow's interests ranged far beyond traditional psychology. He became interested in the application of his theories to management. He wrote a book titled Eupsychian Management in which he picked up on Douglas MacGregor's classification of two types of management in MacGregor's book The Human Side of Enterprise. The first type is Theory

⁵Maslow, pp. 35-58.

⁶Ibid., p.47. ⁷Goble, p.43.

X Management, it is basically authoritarian and the most prevalent type of business management. It assumes the average human dislikes work and therefore must be directed, controlled, forced, and even threatened by punishment if the job is to get done. The second type is Theory Y Management which assumes expenditure of physical or mental effort is natural; that the average human being does not inherently dislike work; that people will exercise self-direction and self-control to bring about objectives which are a function of rewards associated with their achievement; that average human beings, under proper conditions, accept and seek responsibility; that capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity in the solution of organizational problems is widely, not narrowly, distributed in the population; and that under the conditions of modern industrial life, the intellectual potentialities of the average human being are only partially utilized.⁸

Maslow believed Theory Y management generally required well adjusted people in order to work well and would not work in a country inhabited by fearful people.⁹

Another healthy aspect of the work situation . . . is the pleasure of being one of a team, working cooperatively with others as part of a well organized, well functioning organization . . . This is true for the healthy person: but for the deeply disturbed person, there are instances when the pleasure of hatred and destruction is greater than

⁸ Ibid., pp.93-94.

⁹ Ibid.

the pleasure of friendship and cooperation. With only one qualification - healthy workers - Theory Y management will be more productive in the long run than Theory X Management. Not only can Theory Y Management produce a better society, but in a practical hard-headed way, it is the path to industrial and financial success.¹⁰

One reason Theory Y Management works better than Theory X is that dictatorial management injures the dignity and self-respect of the worker, who consciously or unconsciously, fights back to protect his own self-esteem and self-respect . . . approval and recognition build the worker's self-esteem and spur him to greater productivity.¹¹

. . . The principle has great significance in understanding minority groups and others held in low self-esteem.¹²

Practically all research in the industrial situation supports Theory Y and practically none of it, Theory X. An obvious point to be learned from this, Maslow feels, is that industry needs a steady supply of mature, well adjusted people. Industry will have trouble, he points out, using delinquents, criminals, cynical kids, or hostile, destructive people. Today such types are being used, but their use will be successful only when attitudes are changed.¹³

For industry to be successful, healthy managers are as important as healthy workers. The psychologically healthy manager not only will get more production from his workers, he will increase their psychological health as well. The better man and the better groups are the causes and effects of each other and the better group and the better society are the causes and effects of each other . . .¹⁴

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Goble, p.96. Also, Abraham Maslow, Eupsychian Management (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1965), p.44.

¹²Goble, pp. 96-97. Also, Maslow, *ibid.*, p.46.

¹³Goble, p.98. Also, Maslow, *ibid.*, pp. 57-58.

¹⁴Goble, p.99. Also, Maslow, *ibid.*, pp. 75,77.

Corroborating this point, Maslow cited the studies of Rensis Likert.

Where there is more participation in management throughout the company, the men at the top actually have more influence rather than less. That is, the more influence and power you give to someone in the team situation, the more you have to yourself.¹⁵

Maslow believed that Eupsychian Management applies to society as a whole. A high quality society needs citizens who recognize superiority and choose superior people to lead them.¹⁶

He believed that as workers advanced, the Theory X style of management would become obsolete and would have to move toward Theory Y to remain competitive with other institutions.¹⁷

Maslow applied his new way of looking at human beings to social reform. Goble quoted him as saying,

When the philosophy of man (his nature, his goals, his potentialities, his fulfillment) changes, then everything changes: not only the philosophy of politics, economics, of ethics, of values, of interpersonal relations, and of history itself, but also the philosophy of education, of psychotherapy and of personal growth, the theory of how to help men become what they can and deeply need to become.

We are now in the middle of such change in the conception of man's capacities, potentialities, and goals. A new vision is emerging of the possibilities of man and his destiny, and its implications

¹⁵Goble, p.100. Also Maslow, *ibid.*, p.93.

¹⁶Maslow, *ibid.*, pp. 149-150, 153.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p.262.

are many¹⁸

Goble says,

The identification of basic needs common to the entire species encourages far more optimism for cross-cultural harmony than most people now believe. In the study of self-actualizing people Maslow found their similarities far greater than their differences, regardless of their cultural heritage. He found such concepts as freedom, love, justice, and beauty to be universal in superior individuals.¹⁹

The healthy individual's selfish interests and the interests of society become synonymous. The individual who recognizes and seeks to gratify his higher needs behaves voluntarily in a manner beneficial to his society. A person who receives love and respect must of necessity behave in a respectable way. People who have enough basic satisfactions to look for love and respect (rather than just food and safety) tend to develop such qualities as loyalty, friendliness, and civic consciousness, and to become better parents, husbands, teachers, public servants, etc.²⁰

The better society is the society which provides an environment encouraging the development of man's potential. Some basic elements of this external environment - what Maslow calls the preconditions for need satisfaction are freedom, justice and order What Maslow describes as a psychologically sick society, has not enough love, affection, protection, trust, and too much hostility, humiliation, fear, contempt and domination.²¹

Because man's psychological needs are weak and easily frustrated, many individuals, perhaps the majority, are not able to rise above a bad culture. A healthy culture, in Maslow's opinion, would significantly reduce the need for psychotherapy; there would not be as much mental illness if we had a better society. The necessary ingredients for the good society can be scientifically determined through the study of human motivation. The factors are built into human nature and cannot be voted out of existence.²²

¹⁸Goble, p.102. ¹⁹Ibid., p.101.

²⁰Ibid. ²¹Ibid., p.102. ²²Ibid.

Maslow believed society had to change "simultaneously on all fronts, in all its institutions." He could not conceive of any one change that would change all the rest of society.²³

ARONOFF'S INSIGHTS

Joel Aronoff in his book, Psychological Needs and Cultural Systems, records the results of an investigation he conducted to test whether or not Maslow's hierarchy of needs seemed to adequately describe actual life experiences.

He does a case study of two economic units (cane cutters and fisherman) living in the village of Dieppe Bay which is on the island of St. Kitts which in turn is part of the British West Indies.

He uses Maslow's theory of personality as part of his foundations for his study. He compares the two groups using a variety of research instruments and comes up with strong evidence that Maslow's theory adequately describes what has happened in the lives of members of the two groups which accounts for the differences not only in their personality structures but also in their cultural and economic institutions.

The key was the loss, or lack of loss, experienced by members of the two groups up through their twelfth year as children, as determined by loss of siblings and parents through death, desertion and/or migration.

²³Goble, p.104. Also Maslow, Eusychian Management, p.247.

High loss children generally grew up to be adults who had high safety needs and were unable to move on to satisfaction of love and belongingness needs. This affected their choice of mates, their choice of jobs and even how they had to be organized on the job.

Aronoff proposes that cultural forms are the products of three antecedent variables: environment, historical sociocultural institutions and organismically based psychological needs.

The first two groups of variables present a set of conditions within which a particular population is placed. On St. Kitts these were characterized by a scarcity of land which relegated worker housing to dank, unhealthy ravines and the impossibility of owning their own small parcels of land for producing their own food. "It had produced a residential pattern of small, closely packed houses in which a great many people reside."²⁴ The land is primarily used for growing sugar cane and is owned by a few estates. Therefore, the population either works for the estates, the few other businesses that serve the estates and their workers, or they turn to fishing.

Seasonal work coupled with a low level of income results in a poor diet heavy on starchy foods. The poor diet coupled with bad sanitary conditions and limited medi-

²⁴Joel Aronoff, Psychological Needs and Cultural Systems (New York: Van Nostrans, 1967), p.218.

cal resources results in very high infant and adult mortality rates.

Another significant result of these economic determinants is the impossibility, for the majority of the population, to establish some measure of control over their own lives. In other West Indian areas laborers may own their house plots as well as significant amounts of agricultural land. On St. Kitts, the population is forced to work solely on the estates and reside on estate-owned lands. Their entire lives, therefore, must be organized within the scope of the estate system.

The one major alternative to this pattern of life . . . is emigration . . . There are few Kittitians who have not been subject to its influence.²⁵

When this is coupled with high death rates and parental desertion, the loss is extremely widespread for children.

These medical, residential, nutritional, demographic and economic conditions, which result from environmental and past sociocultural institutions, lead to great instability of family life and an orientation of insecurity and exploitation in the adult world in general. The individual, growing up under these conditions, finds little gratification for his most basic needs. Viewing the population as a whole, there has been great deprivation of safety needs, and their dominant concern is, therefore, to find satisfaction of these deprived needs.

²⁵Ibid., p.218-19.

It is in this way that the basic human need structure becomes an antecedent determinant of culture. For the needs outlined by Maslow, events on the social level can serve to deprive pre-existing biological desires, but they do not create motivation. The most basic need deprived becomes a motivational force demanding a form of organization that will allow for a measure of gratification. It becomes the most important source of psychological energy available, while the needs higher on the hierarchy do not emerge, and are, therefore, irrelevant to the organization of culture.

As an antecedent requirement, the deprived need sets up a demand for safety gratifications which enters into a process of adjustment with the institutional demands . . . This readjustment process I have termed 'reciprocal interchange.' I conceive it to be a series of rearrangements over a period of time, perhaps similar to a bargaining process, until a balance is reached between the demands of the social and psychological systems.

It is only when we focus on the effect of the conditions of life on the individual and his response to them, in terms of his demands for basic need gratification, that we complete our understanding of the origins of cultural forms.²⁶

This remarkable study provides strong evidence that Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and the theory related to it, are correct.

CLINEBELL'S INSIGHTS

Howard Clinebell adds another kind of needs which influences the way the other needs are perceived, defined and

²⁶Ibid., pp.219-220

satisfied, on each of the five levels. He calls these spiritual needs and says,

The spiritual dimension of our lives consists of the ways in which we satisfy seven interrelated spiritual needs; the need for a viable philosophy of life, for creative values, for a relationship with a loving God, for developing our higher self, for a sense of trustful belonging in the universe, for renewing moments of transcendence, and for a caring community that nurtures spiritual growth.²⁷

FROMM'S INSIGHTS

Psychoanalyst Erich Fromm observes:

Because the need for a system of orientation and devotion is an intrinsic part of human existence, we can understand the intensity of this need. Indeed, there is no other more powerful source of energy in man.²⁸

Erich Fromm spent many years of his life writing about how social, political, economic and cultural systems affect people. His most explicit work was The Sane Society which was published in 1955, one year after Maslow's Motivation and Personality.

He comes to some of the same conclusions Maslow came to.

The mentally healthy person is the productive and unalienated person; the person who related himself to the world lovingly, and who uses his reason to grasp reality objectively; who experiences himself as a unique individual entity, and at the same time

²⁷Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Growth Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), p.106.

²⁸Erich Fromm, Psychoanalysis and Religion (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950), pp. 24-25.

feels one with his fellow man; who is not subject to irrational authority of conscience and reason; who is in the process of being born as long as he is alive, and considers the gift of life the most precious chance he has.²⁹

. . . . these goals of mental health are not ideals which have to be forced upon the person, or which man can attain only if he overcomes his "nature", and sacrifices his "innate selfishness". On the contrary, the striving for mental health, for happiness, harmony, love, productiveness, is inherent in every human being who is not born a mental or moral idiot. Given a chance these strivings assert themselves forcefully, as can be seen in countless situations.³⁰

Speaking about the healthy society, he says:

What society corresponds to this aim of mental health, and what would be the structure of a sane society? First of all, a society in which no man is a means toward another's ends, but always and without exception an end in himself: hence, where nobody is used, nor uses himself, for purposes which are not those of the unfolding of his own human powers: where man is the center, and where all economic and political activities are subordinated to the aim of his growth. A sane society is one in which qualities like greed, exploitativeness, possessiveness, narcissism, have no chance to be used for greater material gain or for the enhancement of one's personal prestige. Where acting according to one's conscience is looked upon as a fundamental and necessary quality and where opportunism and lack of principles is deemed to be asocial: where the individual is concerned with social matters so that they become personal matters, where his relation to his fellow man is not separated from his relationship in the private sphere. A sane society, furthermore, is one which permits man to operate within manageable and observable dimensions, and to be an active and responsible participant in the life of society, as well as the master of his own life. It is one which furthers human solidarity and not only permits but stimulates, its members to relate themselves to each other loving-

²⁹Erich Fromm, The Sane Society (New York: Rinehart, 1955), p.275.

³⁰Ibid.

ly; a sane society furthers the productive activity of everybody in his work, stimulates the unfolding of reason and enables man to give expression to his inner needs in collective art and rituals.³¹

While Fromm seems to favor a type of socialist society,³² he does not see such societies in either of the two great systems currently competing for dominance. He says:

In the middle of the twentieth century, two great Social Collosi have developed which, being afraid of each other, seek security in every-increasing military rearmament Both rivals claim that their system promises final salvation for man, guarantees the paradise of the future

There is today a decisive difference between the two systems. In the Western world there is freedom to express ideas critical of the existing system. In the Soviet world criticism and expressions of different ideas is suppressed by brute force

But without ignoring the tremendous differences between free Capitalism and authoritarian Communism today, it is short-sighted not to see the similarities, especially as they will develop in the future. Both systems are based on industrialization, their goal is ever-increasing economic efficiency and wealth. They are societies run by a managerial class, and by professional politicians. They are both thoroughly materialistic in their outlook, regardless of Christian ideology in the West and secular messianism in the East. They organize man in a centralized system, in large factories, political mass parties. Everybody is a cog in the machine, and has to function smoothly. In the West, this is achieved by a method of psychological conditioning, mass suggestion, monetary rewards. In the East by all this, plus the use of terror The West develops rapidly in the direction of Huxley's Brave New World, the East is today Orwell's 1984. But both systems tend to converge.

³¹Ibid., p.276.

³²For proof of his preference for a type of socialist society see Erich Fromm, Marx's Concept of Man (New York: Unger, 1961).

What, then are the prospects for the future? The first, and perhaps most likely possibility is that of atomic war But, unfortunately, even the avoidance of war alone does not promise a bright future. In the development of both Capitalism and of Communism as we visualize them in the next fifty or a hundred years, the process of automatization and alienation will proceed. Both systems are developing into managerial societies, their inhabitants well fed, well clad, having their wishes satisfied, and not having wishes which cannot be satisfied: automations, who follow without force, who are guided without leaders, who make machines which act like men and produce men who act like machines: men whose reason deteriorates while their intelligence rises, thus creating the dangerous situation of equipping man with the greatest material power without the wisdom to use it.

This alienation and automatization leads to an ever increasing insanity. Life has no meaning, there is no joy, no faith, no reality. Everybody is "happy" - except that he does not feel, does not reason, does not love.

In the nineteenth century the problem was that God is dead: In the twentieth century the problem is that man is dead. In the nineteenth century inhumanity meant cruelty: in the twentieth century it means schizoid self-alienation. The danger of the past was that men became slaves. The danger of the future is that men may become robots. But given man's nature, robots cannot live and remain sane . . . they will destroy their world and themselves because they cannot stand any longer the boredom of a meaningless life.

Our dangers are war and robotism. What is the alternative? To get out of the rut in which we are moving and to take the next step in the birth and self-realization of humanity

No change must be brought about by force, it must be a simultaneous one in the economic, political and cultural spheres. Changes restricted to one sphere are destructive of every change. Just as primitive man was helpless before natural forces, modern man is helpless before the social and economic forces created by himself. He worships the work of his own hands, bowing to the new idols, yet swearing the name of the God who commanded him to destroy all idols. Man can protect himself from the consequences of his own madness only by creating a sane society

which conforms with the needs of man, needs which are rooted in the very conditions of his existence. A society in which man relates to man lovingly, in which he is rooted in bonds of brotherliness and solidarity, rather than in the ties of blood and soil; a society which gives him the possibility of transcending nature by creating rather than destroying, in which everyone gains a sense of self by experiencing himself as the subject of his powers rather than by conformity, in which a system of orientation and devotion exists without man's needing to distort reality and to worship idols.

Building such a society means taking the next step: it means the end of "humanoid" history, the phase in which man had not become fully human. It does not mean, the "end of days", the "completion", the state of perfect harmony in which no conflicts or problems confront men When things have truly become his servants rather than his idols, he will be confronted with the truly human conflicts and problems: he will have to be adventuresome, courageous, imaginative, capable of suffering and of joy, but his powers will be in the service of life and not in the service of death. The new phase of human history, if it comes to pass, will be a new beginning, not an end

We are in reach of achieving a state of humanity which corresponds to the vision of our great teachers: yet we are in danger of the destruction of all civilization, or of robotization. A small tribe was told thousands of years ago: I put before you life and death, blessing and curse - you chose life. This is our choice too.³³

Maslow and Fromm have described how societies effect their members. Aronoff provided empirical evidence for Maslow's theory of needs and demonstrated how psychological needs effect socio-cultural-economic institutions. All support the idea that individuals need to exert more influence over decisions that affect their own lives: that, in fact, people will develop only so far without such influences.

³³Fromm, The Sane Society, pp. 357-363.

FREIRE'S INSIGHTS

Paulo Freire makes an even stronger case for such influence by individuals in cooperation with their fellow human beings. In fact, he believes any society built on any other foundation is oppressive. He is a Brazilian educator who developed a system of adult education that has profound consequences for citizen participation in decision making. This system is described in his book Pedagogy of the Oppressed. It can be called dialogical education for its essence is dialogue between those who initiate the teaching process and those who respond to the process. Freire's purpose in such education is to develop free people who are able to name their own world and mold their own futures. He does this by waking his students' critical consciousness through the investigation of "generative words" and, later, "generative themes." These are words and themes taken from a particular peoples' existential situation.

Freire says,

It is as transforming and creative beings that men, in their permanent relations with reality, produce not only material goods-tangible objects - but also social institutions, ideas and concepts. Through their continuing praxis, men simultaneously create history and become historical-social beings. Because - in contrast to animals - men can tri-dimensionalize time into the past, the present, and the future, their history, in function of their own creations, develops as a constant process of transformation within which epochal units materialize . . .

An epoch is characterized by a complex of ideas, concepts, hopes, doubts, values, and challenges in dialectical interaction with their opposites, striving

towards plenitude. The concrete representation of many of these ideas, values, concepts, and hopes, as well as the obstacles which impede man's full humanization, constitute the themes of that epoch. These themes imply others which are opposing or even antithetical: they also indicate tasks to be carried out and fulfilled. Thus, historical themes are never isolated, independent, disconnected, or static: they are always interacting dialectically with their opposites. Nor can these themes be found anywhere except in the men-world relationship. The complex of interacting themes of an epoch constitutes its "thematic universe".

Confronted by this "universe of themes" in dialectical contradiction, men take equally contradictory positions: some work to maintain the structures, others to change them. As antagonism deepens between themes which are the expression of reality, there is a tendency for the themes and for reality itself to be mythicized, establishing a climate of irrationality and sectarianism In such a situation, myth-creating irrationality itself becomes a fundamental theme. Its opposing theme, the critical and dynamic view of the world, strives to unveil reality, unmask its mythicization, and achieve a full realization of the human task: the permanent transformation of reality in favor of the liberation of man.

In the last analysis, the themes both contain and are contained in limit-situations: the tasks they imply require limit-acts

In sum, limit-situations imply the existence of persons who are directly or indirectly served by these situations, and of those who are negated and curbed by them. Once the latter come to perceive those situations as the frontier between being and being more human, rather than the frontier between being and nothingness, they begin to direct their increasingly critical actions towards achieving the untested feasibility implicit in that perception. On the other hand, those who are served by the present limit-situation regard the untested feasibility as a threatening limit-situation which must not be allowed to materialize and act to maintain the status quo. Consequently, liberating actions upon an historical milieu must correspond not only to generative themes but to the way in which these themes

are perceived.³⁴

Freire calls these themes "generative" because ". . . they contain the possibility of unfolding into again as many theses, which in their turn call for new tasks to be fulfilled".³⁵

He reminds us,

"that the generative theme cannot be found in men, divorced from reality: nor yet in reality, divorced from men: much less in 'no man's land'. It can only be apprehended in the men-world relationship. To investigate the generative theme is to investigate man's thinking about reality and man's action upon reality, which is his praxis. For precisely this reason, the methodology proposed requires that the investigators and the people (who would normally be considered objects of that investigation) should act as co-investigators. The more active an attitude men take in regard to the exploration of their thematics, the more they deepen their critical awareness of reality and, in spelling out these thematics, take possession of that reality."³⁶

Again, Freire says,

We must realize that the aspirations, the motives, and the objectives implicit in the meaningful thematics are human aspirations, motives and objectives They are as historical as men themselves: consequently they cannot be apprehended apart from men But precisely because it is not possible to understand these themes apart from men - it is necessary that the men concerned understand them as well. Thematic investigation thus becomes a common striving towards awareness of reality and towards self-awareness, which makes the investigation a starting point for the educational process or for cultural action of a liberating character.³⁷

The important thing, from the point of view of li-

³⁴Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Seabury Press, 1970), pp. 91-93.

³⁵Ibid., p.92. ³⁶Ibid., p.97. ³⁷Ibid., p.98.

bertarian education, is for men to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions and those of their comrades. Because this view of education starts with the conviction that it cannot present its own program but must search for this program dialogically with the people, it serves to introduce the pedagogy of the oppressed, in the elaboration of which the oppressed must participate.³⁸

Freire's belief that the people must participate in naming and forming their own world is absolute. He says,

Organizing the people is the process in which the revolutionary leaders, who are also prevented from saying their own word, initiate the experience of learning how to name the world. This is true learning experience, and therefore, dialogical. So it is that the leaders cannot say their word alone: they must say it with the people. Leaders who do not act dialogically, but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people - they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress.³⁹

Freire seems to recognize the danger of anarchy in his position. He adds,

The dialogical theory of action opposes both authoritarianism and license, and thereby affirms authority and freedom. There is no freedom without authority, but there is also no authority without freedom . . .

Authentic authority is not affirmed as such by a mere transfer of power, but through delegation or in sympathetic adherence

In this theory of dialogical action, organization requires authority, so it cannot be authoritarian: it requires freedom, so it cannot be licentious. Organization is, rather, a highly educational process in which leaders and people together experience true authority and freedom, which they then seek to establish in society by transforming the reality which mediates them.⁴⁰

³⁸Ibid., P.118. ³⁹Ibid., p.179.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp.179-80.

The purpose of all this is cultural synthesis.

Freire says,

Cultural action is always a systematic and deliberate form of action which operates upon the social structure, either with the objective of preserving that structure or of transforming it. As a form of deliberate and systematic action, all cultural action has its theory which determines its ends and thereby defines its methods. Cultural action either serves domination (consciously or unconsciously) or it serves the liberation of men. As those dialectically opposed types of cultural action operate in and upon the social structure, they create dialectical relations of permanence and change.

The social structure, in order to be, must become: in other words, becoming is the way the social structure expresses "duration", in the Bergsonian sense of the term.

Dialogical cultural action . . . aims . . . at surmounting the antagonistic contradictions of the social structure, thereby achieving the liberation of man.

Antidialogical cultural action, on the other hand, aims at mythicizing such contradictions, thereby hoping to avoid (or hinder insofar as possible) the radical transformation of reality. Antidialogical action explicitly or implicitly aims to preserve, within the social structures, situations which favor its own agents. While the latter would never accept a transformation of the structures sufficiently radical to overcome its antagonistic contradictions, they may accept reforms which do not affect their power of decision over the oppressed

In cultural invasion, the actors draw the thematic content of their own values and ideology; their starting point is their own world, from which they enter the world of those they invade. In cultural synthesis the actors who come from "another world" to the world of the people do so not as invaders. They do not come to teach or to transmit or to give anything, but rather to learn, with the people about the people's world.

Cultural synthesis is thus a mode of action for confronting culture itself, as the preserver of the very structures by which it was formed. Cultural action as historical action, is an instrument for

superseding the dominant alienated and alienating culture. In this sense, every authentic revolution is a cultural revolution.

The investigation of the people's generative themes or meaningful thematics . . . constitutes the starting point for the process of action as cultural synthesis

The subjects of thematic investigation are not only the professional investigators, but also the men of the people whose thematic universe is being sought. Investigation - the first moment of action as cultural synthesis - establishes a climate of creativity which will tend to develop in the subsequent stages of action

Those who are invaded, whatever their level, rarely go beyond the models which the invaders prescribe for them. In cultural synthesis there are no invaders: hence there are no imposed models. In their stead, there are actors who critically analyze reality (never separating this analysis from action) and intervene as subjects in the historical process.

Instead of following predetermined plans, leaders and people, mutually identified, together create the guidelines of their action. In this synthesis, leaders and people are somehow reborn in new knowledge and new action. Knowledge of the alienated culture leads to transforming action resulting in a culture which is being freed from alienation. The more sophisticated knowledge of the leaders is remade in the empirical knowledge of the people, while the latter is refined by the former.

In cultural synthesis - and only in cultural synthesis - it is possible to resolve the contradiction between the world view of the leaders and that of the people, to the enrichment of both. Cultural synthesis does not deny the differences between the two views: indeed, it is based on those differences. It does deny the invasion of one by the other, but affirms the undeniable support each gives to the other

Revolutionary leaders commit many errors and miscalculations by not taking into account something so real as the people's view of the world: a view which explicitly and implicitly contains their concerns, their doubts, their hopes, their way of seeing the leaders, their perceptions of themselves and of the oppressors, their religious beliefs (almost always

syncretic), their fatalism, their rebellious reactions. None of these elements can be seen separately, for in interaction all of them compose a totality

Cultural synthesis (precisely because it is a synthesis) does not mean that the objectives of revolutionary action should be limited by the aspirations expressed in the world view of the people

The oppressed, in order to become free, also need a theory of action.

The oppressor elaborates his theory of action without the people for he stands against them. Nor can the people - as long as they are crushed and oppressed, internalizing the image of the oppressor - construct by themselves the theory of their liberating action. Only in the encounter of the people with the revolutionary leaders - in their communion, in their praxis - can this theory be built.⁴¹

There can hardly be a stronger statement than Pedagogy of the Oppressed in supporting the building of whole societies on citizen participation (or dialogue if you would) in decision making! It is almost utopian in its vision. At the very least it requires dramatically more intense dialogue between centralized managers and decentralized policy makers. It might require decentralization of decision making until our basic political-economic-cultural units resembled in scale the Greek polis of old. Many thinkers seem to favor such a scale of human activity. However, during the meantime we live in a reality characterized by gigantic concentrations of people and power which is at the opposite end of the political spectrum. We dare not wait for such decentralization to implement what we can of citi-

⁴¹Ibid., pp.180-186.

zen participation in reality as it now is. Freire's dream can serve as our ultimate goal for citizen participation in decision making.

In this chapter, then we have seen how environmental, economic and sociocultural forces interact with psychological needs to shape each other. Implicit in the discussion has been the belief that application of humanity's reasoning powers to the situation could vastly improve the human condition. Freire focuses on dialogical cultural action as the way to harness these powers to the energies of the people who must implement them if they are to be used.

We now turn to a specific plan for community action.

CHAPTER V

A PLAN FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

Dialogical Community Action is a synthesis of Paulo Freire's dialogical cultural action, of stratified random sample surveying combined with ethnographic interviewing techniques and of certain citizen participation techniques I discovered while Mayor of the City of Simi Valley, California.

THE HEART OF DIALOGICAL COMMUNITY ACTION

The first step is to have one who is skilled in designing stratified random samples develop such a sample for the community targeted for action. In Simi Valley, California, a city whose population was about 65,000 at that time, a consultant developed such a design for the Ventura County Council on Drug Abuse that called for interviewing individuals from 100 different households. He assured us the design would yield information representative of all the residents of the city if the design were vigorously followed.

The next step is to design the interviewing instrument. It should record demographic information such as the age, sex, ethnic background, occupation, family income level and educational level of each of the respondents. Because such instruments need to be quite sophisticated, expert help should be obtained to assist in its development. It is abso-

lutely essential that it be field tested before it is used in order to spot difficulties that will otherwise distort the stratified random sample. Part of this field testing should include dialogue with citizens from the community where it will be used. Open ended instruments that allow people to respond as they wish are much preferred over the usual Gallup Poll style surveys that demand "yes" or "no" or "undecided" responses. While it is possible some communities will have the time and people necessary to conduct Freire's thematic investigations as he conducted them, most communities will want to shorten that process. I recommend an open ended questionnaire that asks questions designed to open up broad areas for commentary by the respondents. Such commentaries should be recorded on a tape recorder.

Each community must design its own interviewing instrument. It should start with questions that are most easily answered and move into more difficult questions later in the questionnaire. Typical questions might be, "How long have you lived in this community?" "Why did you move here?"; "Why do you stay here?"; "What do you like about this community?"; "What don't you like about it?"; "What community activities do you participate in?"; "Do you feel you belong in this community?"; "Do you leave this community for some of your main activities? If so, what activities and where do you go?"; "How do you get your information about what is happening in your community and the world outside it?"; "Do you participate in the political processes of your community?;

If so, how?"; "What are the most important issues facing your community?"; "What are you doing about these issues?"; "Do you feel anyone listens to you?"; "How do you go about changing something you don't like?"; "Do you feel anyone would miss you if you suddenly disappeared?"; "What are the most important things you would like to see your community do?"

These questions are just examples of the kinds of questions that may be asked. The important thing is to frame questions that will catalyze the respondents¹ commentaries. Used by skilled interviewers, they will yield significant information about the important concerns of the respondents.

The third step is to recruit and train interviewers. These might be volunteers from the community or they could be paid. Each interview will take between one and three hours. Twice that much time will be spent in "decoding" the information by writing up a report on each interview. No more than five interviews should be assigned each volunteer. Therefore, no more than twenty-five volunteers, including supervisors could complete this phase of dialogical community action. Paid interviewers will usually be able to interview a much larger number, meaning they could be much fewer in number.

The fourth step is to conduct the interview. Res-

¹Clark Akins and George Beschner (eds.) Ethnography (Rockville, Md: National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1980), see particularly pp. 67-71.

pondents should be assured their responses will be kept confidential. The interviews should be decoded as soon as possible after each interview is completed. Interviewers may want to share the results of their interviews with each other and their supervisors during the decoding process. It is a fairly common practise in ethnographic research to pay respondents for their time. If the budget can absorb the extra cost it may make it easier to get respondent cooperation. However, lack of enough money to provide such payments should not be a reason to scrub the whole effort.

The fifth step is to share the results of the interviews with various experts in the social sciences, religion, etc., to put the responses in proper theoretical framework. The interviewers should dialogue with the experts until they master the materials. Then, they will return to the respondents to share with them the results of the interviews and their dialogues with the experts. The purpose of the follow-up interviews is to develop dialogue with the respondents which will allow them to confirm or correct what is in the interviewer's reports. Usually the respondents will have new vistas opened to them that they had not considered before. As the decoding and dialogue processes develop, themes will begin emerging (such as oppression) that can enlighten the respondents about their situations. The results of these dialogues are tape recorded and a final report is written by the interviewers. The final step in this first phase of the program is analysis again by the experts with

a final report developed by them which summarizes and comments on the results of the process.

Because they come from stratified random sampling, the responses speak for the whole community. If the program proceeded no further except to disseminate these results to community decision makers and the press, it could have significant impact in most communities. One of the most common complaints of elected officials is they only hear from special interests because the people are silent. They could no longer say that when presented the results of such a survey.

ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION MODULES FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

However, phase two of dialogical community action could increase the impact of the survey. This would consist in organizing neighborhood or even block discussion groups that would meet in various private homes to discuss the results of the survey. If cable television were available, the small groups could view a program on the survey with telephone hook-up to the studio presenters so dialogue could take place between the presenters and the groups. This would probably occur a couple hours at a time over a period of a few weeks. Again, the process could stop at this point and it could be expected individuals would continue acting on the information they had assimilated.

Phase three of dialogical community action is the development of action groups to work on specific problems and

opportunities identified by the previous processes. It might be decided that the citizen participation process which had begun with the surveying and dialogues, should be continued on a more formal basis under the sponsorship of some community or political entity. Block or neighborhood councils would be ideal structures for following up on the results of the first two phases of dialogical community action. Other action groups could spin off from the first two phases based on the interests of particular citizens. Much of the action would be non-political self-help action. Other action would be specific political action designed to capture enough power on a particular issue to accomplish the objectives.

It could be expected that one objective that would emerge from this process would be continually expanding citizen participation in the communities' decision making processes until optimum participation was achieved.

Citizen participation in decision making at the local community level is not enough. Too many of the key decisions affecting peoples' lives are not made at the local level. However, people who have been exposed to participatory democracy at the local level will begin wanting it on the job and in other dimensions of their lives. Hopefully, they will begin demanding a restructuring of the way society conducts its affairs so that the structures are far more amenable to increased participation in decision making. By conscious design, or more probably by accident, systems

have become far more complicated than they need be. Therefore, by conscious redesign to break them up into "bite size" pieces, decision making closer to the grass roots is highly feasible. But this means certain people, particularly the technocrats, must give up power. That seldom happens voluntarily. Therefore, the people must take back the power that is rightfully theirs through various kinds of tactics. The type of tactics required depends upon the type of legal and political institutions available in a particular society. Citizen participation networks would undoubtedly emerge from several communities going through dialogical community action. Such networks could grow in scale to national, and even international dimensions.

The key to all this is cooperative action. It can start with a few committed people who know what they want to do and are willing to work together to do it. As the popular song says,

Give me ten men who are stout hearted men who will
fight for the right they adore/Give me ten men who
are stout hearted men and I'll soon give you ten
thousand more!

Even ten such men and women in a local community can get dialogical community action underway. As they act they will be amazed at how things start to move - and at how they and their fellow citizens can take control of their own destinies. I have found very few people are really apathetic when they have a practical plan for involvement and action.

There is always the danger that those who use these

techniques will become a new elite. However, this cannot happen if their techniques are truly dialogical and they maintain roles as process facilitators.

CHAPTER VI

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION THEOLOGY

The Good News (Gospel) from the perspective of citizen participation in decisions affecting their own lives is that it is God's will that all people, everywhere, be free from all oppression.

INSIGHTS FROM THE "POLITICAL" THEOLOGIES

Too often church people have tried to limit the benefits of God's salvific acts to believers. However, whenever they have attempted this they have arrayed themselves against the main thrust of the Bible itself. The Bible reveals a God whose mighty acts benefit the whole cosmos. God's salvific acts begin with creation itself. All that God has created is available for humankind's benefit or woe depending on how it is appropriated by humankind. These benefits include liberation of entire nations from slavery as when Israel was freed from bondage to Egypt.

Gustavo Gutierrez, a Latin American liberation theologian, claims the act of creation is linked in the Bible with the freeing of Israel from slavery. Both are salvific acts by God on behalf of humankind. He quotes Andre Neher who writes:

The first thing that is expressed in the Jewish Passover is the certainty of freedom. With the Exodus a new age has struck for humanity: redemption from misery. If the Exodus had not taken

place, marked as it was by the twofold sign of the over-riding will of God and the free and conscious assent of men, the historical destiny of humanity would have followed another course. This course would have been radically different, as the redemption, the Gueilah of the Exodus from Egypt, would not have been its foundation All constraint is accidental; all misery is only provisional. The breath of freedom which has blown over the world since the Exodus can dispel them this very day.¹

Gutierrez says the work of Christ is part of this salvific history and indeed, brings it to complete fulfillment. Christ's redemptive action is conceived as recreation, particularly in the prologue of the Gospel according to Saint John.

The work of Christ is a new creation. In this sense Paul speaks of a "new creation" in Christ. Moreover, it is through this "new creation" that is to say, through the salvation which Christ affords, that creation acquires its full meaning. But the work of Christ is presented simultaneously as a liberation from sin and from all its consequences: despoliation, injustice, hatred. This liberation fulfills in an unexpected way the promises of the prophets and creates a new chosen people, which this time includes all humanity. Creation and salvation therefore have, in the first place, a Christological sense: all things have been created in Christ, all things have been saved in him (cf. Col. 1:15-20).

Man is the crown and center of the work of creation and is called to continue it through his labor and not only through his labor. The liberation from Egypt, linked to an event coinciding with creation, adds an element of capital importance: the need and the place for man's active participation in the building of society. If Faith 'desacralizes' creation, making it the area proper for the work of man, the Exodus from Egypt, the home of a sacred monarchy, reinforces this idea: it is the 'desacralization' of social praxis, which from that time on will be the work of man. By working, transforming the world,

¹ Andre Neher, Moses and the Vocation of the Jewish People (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 136-37.

breaking out of servitude, building a just society and assuming his destiny in history, man forges himself. In Egypt, work is alienated and, far from building a just society, contributes rather to increasing injustice and to widening the gap between exploiters and exploited.²

Gutierrez claims the Bible presents eschatology as the driving force of salvific history radically oriented toward the future. Eschatology is thus not just one more element of Christianity, but the very key to understanding the Christian Faith.³

God's action in history and at its end are one. The full significance of God's action in history can be understood only when it is seen from the vantage point of the final meaning of history at its end.

Jesus and the prophets proclaimed a Kingdom of peace and justice.

Gutierrez says,

(The Kingdom) presupposes the defense of the rights of the poor, punishment of the oppressors, a life free from the fear of being enslaved by others, the liberation of the oppressed. Peace, justice, love and freedom are not private realities; they are not only internal attitudes. They are social realities, implying a historical liberation. A poorly understood spiritualization has often made us forget the human consequences of the eschatological promises and the power to transform unjust social structures which they imply. The elimination of misery and exploitation is a sign of the coming of the kingdom.⁴

The eschatological promises cannot be totally identified with any particular social reality. They serve as God's lure calling the world to higher and higher achieve-

²Gustavo Gutierrez, A Theology of Liberation (Maryknoll, Ny: Orbis Books, 1973), pp. 158-59.

³Ibid., p.162. ⁴Ibid., p.167.

ment. However, they will not be completely achieved until the end of history when the Kingdom will be fully given as a gift.⁵

The fundamental obstacle to the Kingdom is sin which is also the cause of all misery and injustice. God's salvific act in Christ strikes at the very heart of misery and injustice as it conquers sin. This provides the precondition for growth of the Kingdom, a just society, and new people. All struggle against exploitation and alienation is an attempt to conquer selfishness so all attempts to build just societies are liberating. They are part of God's work.⁶

Gutierrez quotes from a document titled "La Pastoral en las misiones de America Latina:"

All the dynamism of the cosmos and of human history, the movement towards the creation of a more just and fraternal world, the overcoming of social inequalities among men, the efforts so urgently needed . . . to liberate man from all that depersonalizes him - physical and moral misery, ignorance, and hunger - as well as the awareness of human dignity . . . all these originate, are transformed, and reach their perfection in the saving work of Christ. In him and through him salvation is present at the heart of man's history, and there is no human act which, in the last instance, is not defined in terms of it.⁷

There are political dimensions to the Gospel that are a part of God's salvific design. These dimensions come from the very nucleus of its message and not from one or another foreign ideology. It is subversive of all existing po-

⁵Ibid., p.177. ⁶Ibid., pp.176-77.

⁷Ibid., p.178.

litical systems because it takes on Israel's hope of God's Kingdom as the end of domination of one person or people over another.⁸

INSIGHTS FROM THE "DOING THEOLOGY"
OF JOHN VINCENT

So the Good News is for all people, their social structures as well as for individuals. The Church benefits from the Good News because it is part of the world. However, it also has a special role to play in proclaiming the Good News to the rest of the world. To be a Christian means to make Jesus Christ the final authority in all matters. In seeking such authority we not only look at his words but also his actions. I repeat Vincent, again, on this point:

It is important to see the whole Jesus pattern as the way of wholeness and not just parts of it.⁹

Luke 4:18-19, 21 and Matthew 25:31-46 summarize the Gospel. Luke 4:18-19, 21 says,

The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has annointed me to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind. To set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord

Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.

When we are tempted to separate the spiritual and phy-

⁸Ibid., p.231.

⁹John Vincent, The Jesus Thing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), p.86.

sical aspects of reality, we must remember that Jesus' work, as can be seen by his own life and ministry, included both aspects in one unity. He healed the sick and fed the multitudes but he also warned that man does not live by bread alone.¹⁰

Matthew 25:31-46 says people will be judged by their feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, taking in the stranger, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and ministering to those in prison. These are all actions oriented to here and now human needs. They are fruits that result from a spiritual work which has been wrought by God in one's heart.¹¹ They are proof of discipleship.

Part of the Jesus story is his calling disciples to share his ministry to the world. After his death and resurrection they became the Church, the Body in whom lives the resurrected Christ, continuing his ministry to the world. Thus, the things of Jesus are the things of the Church. As Jesus' call was to free humankind from all forms of oppression so is the Church's call.

The purpose of Jesus' ministry - and therefore the Church's ministry - is proclamation of God's salvific acts on behalf of the world.

As we have seen, God's salvific acts are performed for all creation not just for those who have consciously

¹⁰Matthew 4:4; Luke 4:4.

¹¹John 3:14,15; Matthew 7:15-20.

given themselves to God.¹² The sun and rain are given the just and the unjust alike.¹³ The fruits of technology are available to believers and unbelievers alike as are just political systems. All these and much more, from a Christian perspective, are part of God's saving acts on behalf of all humankind. It is our task as the Church to continue Jesus' work by helping to deliver these blessings of God to the World. The question is not "Should we?" The question is "How do we best do these things so we do not subvert our good intent?"

First, we must remember, as Vincent reminds us, that Jesus does not come to 'reveal God' - he comes to reveal the world in which he claims God has hidden himself.¹⁴

Vincent adds,

Practically, this implies a complete openness on the part of the disciple toward all men and therefore to all politics, convictions, influences, reforms, and movements among men. The Christian is thus a "pragmatist" rather than a man of principle, as a basic stance, because he ventures to assume a hidden dynamic in existence and history which it was the purpose of the incarnation to initiate - veritable "God-with-man-ness" - which demands, not simply that he needs and applauds man as such (that is to say very little), but he heeds the Jesus man to see what humanity could be and, already at its best or possibly most unselfconscious tries to be.¹⁵

¹²John 3:16-21; Romans 8:22.

¹³Matthew 5:45.

¹⁴Vincent, p.59.

¹⁵Ibid., p.64.

The parables rarely "explain" it all. Rather they suggest that there's more in life than one thought of at first The Kingdom is the name that Jesus gives to this "thing" in life which is the more, 'the hidden' - in New Testament terms; the messianic, 'the accepted by God,' 'the sign of God's rule'.¹⁶

The preachings and parables of Jesus achieve and indicate the utter secularization of God and the Kingdom of God, and proclaim that a Kingdom is now hidden with apparently purely secular, selfish, political or mercenary actions. The gospel of Jesus is that men deal with God through the secular, the selfish, the political, the mercenary: and that they do not deal with him or the Kingdom directly, but only through these things.¹⁷

Positively, the Kingdom is the latent dynamic within the human spirit, the continuing evolution of the universe, the contemporary humanism, the process of history, man's contemporary society, and the historical terminus This opens up for the Christian a dual privilege and a task. On the other hand, he has a ministry of identification; of seeing the places where events, movements, tendencies, persons or groups seem to reflect the possibilities of healing. On the other hand, he operated under the hesitation necessitated by the good news of the Kingdom's hiddenness. And this is good because it means that man is delivered from ultimate presumption, from pride and over confidence. He must act, and act boldly: but he still does it "in faith" as if there were always "more than meets the eye" in it all.

The ministry of identification means the seeking out of the poor, the disinherited, the victims, the handicapped, and the disadvantaged. The disciples' human strength or resources are used for them, and by his identification with them he may proclaim, so far as he can see, the hidden Kingdom's coming near to them and to him in their actual situation.¹⁸

Second, we continue Jesus' work by forgiving our neighbor. Vincent says,

¹⁶Ibid., p.68. ¹⁷Ibid., p.69.

¹⁸Ibid., pp.69-70.

The meals of Jesus with outcasts and prostitutes achieve and indicate the forgiveness of God present in the deeds of Jesus, which is forgiveness of God in "acted Parable", and is seen as such by the Scribes and Pharisees. The gospel is that all men now stand before the feast of God's presence

God now in Jesus forgives all men inasmuch as and precisely when they have forgiven their neighbor. God's forgiveness can be taken for granted; man's forgiveness of man is all that is required to avail oneself of it.¹⁹

. . . Since both my forgiveness and his can be mediated only by deed rather than word, I must seek and allow him to seek acted parables whereby forgiveness can be embodied, dramatized and extended.²⁰

In the Gospels, the disciples become involved in the work of Jesus in acted parables. Jesus indicated the acceptance of all men, their sharing in the messianic banquet, and the disciples' place as servants within it, in the feeding of the five thousand.²¹

. . . If only the world and the disciples would be content thus to be tricked into being released, through this technique of acting as if things were different, then the dynamic of mutual reconciliation would be let loose. Without it there is only straightforwardness, and decency, and honesty, and self-satisfaction and thus pride, insensitivity, and standing on dignity.²²

The Church is not constituted by those who believe the gospel but by those who act the good news, that is embody those saving ministries which they have seen in Jesus.²³

Positively, this means a community of people who are prepared to operate upon the assumption that the dynamic of the Kingdom is present in the world and available forever as a way to imitate.²⁴

Jesus has initiated a fellowship of fellow workers,

¹⁹Ibid., pp.71,72. ²⁰Ibid., p.73.

²¹Ibid. ²²Ibid., p.74. ²³Ibid., p.75.

²⁴Ibid., p.76.

dying and rising with him, not a mass of worshipers clinging to the benefits of his passion.²⁵

Fourth, Church people need to become God's saboteurs.

. . . . the world can only be won to its own redemption by a trick or by the disciple himself being so worldly that the world mistakes him for itself, and finds itself following his way of humanness, vocation, identification with the needy, acted parables and secret discipline for others, and thus willy nilly, encountering the living techniques which are its own salvation. All the disciple has to do is to be content to be the unilateral initiator, the vicarious savior, the experimental guinea pig, the Christ who perishes in every age for those who have no imagination.²⁶

Fifth, Church people need to be guided by hope in the resurrection.

The long arguments about resurrection in the New Testament have tended to obscure the simple reason behind the resurrection motif. It is: Jesus is alive; that the Jesus thing is unconquerable; that despite the evidence there is an ultimate future only for him and his way.²⁷

. . . the resurrection is the yes of God to mankind. It is the yes of God to the life of incarnation, healing, identification, forgiveness, discipleship, and crucifixion.²⁸

Sixth, Church people must go through the processes inherent in the incarnation.

. . . the Jesus people or the Jesus actions must always begin at incarnation, never at resurrection.²⁹

Resurrections are our hope but they are always God's gifts when and where God chooses.

²⁵Ibid., p.78. ²⁶Ibid., p.79. ²⁷Ibid., p.80.

²⁸Ibid., p.81. ²⁹Ibid., p.82.

Seven, Church people can never identify any historical development as God's Kingdom. It remains the perfect consummation given by God at the end of history.

The Christian is committed not to revolution but to continuing revolution The Christian is committed to wholehearted involvement in specific acts and policies, but when he has seen them brought to fruition, he does not imagine that anything permanent has been obtained, but only one section of existence rectified temporarily for the salvation of men.³⁰

Eight, the way of suffering service is the way to social change.

The gospel is that God repudiates justice and power, and uses self-sacrifice to open up a new and living way whereby others may bring redemption through self-offering, that is, through Christ.³¹

(For the radical) Faith consists in the willingness to work as if the Jesus thing was working.³²

Jesus suffered as a result of his life of service and challenge to authorities.³³

The cross is not the summary of the gospel: it is the sign of the gospel's rejection by men. The Christian must live out the whole gospel, which means acting as if the whole Jesus story, the Jesus thing, was happening still in history.³⁴

Ninth, we finally turn to one of God's creative gifts to humanity, the whole body of so-called "secular" knowledge to guide us in delivering God's blessings to the world. Obviously, no one book or discipline can provide us with needed answers. That is why there are so many of us

³⁰Ibid. ³¹Ibid., p.78. ³²Ibid., pp.83,84.

³³Ibid., p.85. ³⁴Ibid.

with different talents, knowledge and skills. We all have something to contribute to the "how". To implement our knowledge we need a process that will make use of our varied talents, knowledge and skills to provide the many "hows" needed to meet the world's needs. I submit this can best be done by various means of producing citizen participation in our societies' decision making processes.

INSIGHTS FROM PROCESS THOUGHT

I have already described some of the process thought of Whitehead and his followers. It provides a conceptual foundation for citizen participation in decision making which at the same time is profoundly religious. He saw the entire universe as being composed of units which he called "epochal occasions" or "actual entities".

Then the actual world is a community of epochal occasions. In the physical world each epochal occasion is a definite limited physical event, limited both as to space and time, but with time-duration as well as with its full spatial dimensions.

The epochal occasions are the primary units of the actual community, and the community is composed of the units. But each unit has in its nature a reference to every other member of the community, so that each unit is a microcosm representing in itself the entire all-inclusive universe.³⁵

Griffin says of Whitehead's process:

Whitehead's view of process has a distinctive character. He affirmed that the temporal process is a "transition" from one actual entity to another.

³⁵ Alfred North Whitehead, Religion in the Making (New York: Macmillan, 1954), p.89.

These entities are momentary events which perish immediately upon coming into being. The perishing marks the transition to the succeeding events. Time is not a single smooth flow, but comes into being in little droplets. A motion picture suggests an analogy: the picture appears to be a continuous flow, whereas in reality it is constituted by a series of distinct frames.³⁶

In the transition from one occasion to the next the succeeding occasion is open to the totality of the past. Griffin says, "once the rush of influences enters in, the window is closed, while the occasion of experience forms itself by response to those influences."³⁷ In forming itself the entity has some ability to choose how it will respond and is not strictly determined by the past. These actual entities should not be confused with societies of actual entities which make up complex life forms such as individual human beings. Actual entities are the building blocks of the universe and are to be found in inanimate as well as animate objects. Of course, the more complex the societies of actual entities are, the more complex is their decision making processes and the freer they are to respond to the past inputs.

Whitehead envisions a dynamic, developing universe which he analyzes into "(1) the actual world, passing in time; and (2) those elements which go to its formation."

Such formative elements are not themselves actual and passing; they are the factors which are either

³⁶ John B. Cobb, Jr., and David Ray Griffin, Process Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), p.14.

³⁷ Ibid., p.20.

non-actual or non-temporal, disclosed in the analysis of what is both actual and temporal.

They constitute the formative character of the actual temporal world. We know nothing beyond this temporal world and the formative elements which jointly constitute its character. The temporal world and its formative elements constitute for us the all-inclusive universe.

These formative elements are:

1. The creativity whereby the actual world has its character of temporal passage to novelty.
2. The realm of ideal entities, or forms, which are in themselves not actual, but are such that they are exemplified in everything that is actual, according to some proportion of relevance.
3. The actual but non-temporal entity whereby the indetermination of mere creativity is transmuted into determinate freedom. This non-temporal actual entity is what men call God - - the supreme God of rationalized religion.³⁸

God has two natures: God's primordial nature includes all possible values but they are only possible and not actual; and God's consequent nature which apprehends the results of the choices of all actual entities and their societies in the entire universe at any given point in time and in the process adds a dimension through God's redemptive power that would otherwise be missing. Indeed, God's consequent nature is the element which gives direction to creative energies that would otherwise be aimless and result in nothingness. In God's interaction with the actual entities and their societies God provides the upward lure always luring them toward the possible values caught up in God's pri-

³⁸Whitehead, pp. 87,88.

mordial nature. However, the actual entities and their societies have the freedom to choose lesser values and usually do.

Griffin says of Whitehead's concept of the consequent nature of God:

Since the Consequent Nature is God as fully actual . . . the term "consequent" makes the . . . point . . . that God as fully actual is responsive to and receptive of the worldly actualizations. This divine relativity is not limited to a "bare knowledge" of the new things happening in the world. Rather, the responsiveness includes a sympathetic feeling with the worldly beings, all of whom have feelings. Hence, it is not merely the content of God's knowledge which is dependent, but God's own emotional state. God enjoys our enjoyments, and suffers with our sufferings. This is the kind of responsiveness which is truly divine and belongs to the very nature of perfection. Hence it belongs to the ideal for human existence.³⁹

God's consequent nature, then, takes all the responses of all the entities of the universe into God's own nature and through God's own suffering involvement redeems the moment, sustains the existence of the universe and lures the entities and their societies on to the higher achievement.

Obviously, process thought shares the limitations of all human attempts to describe ultimate reality and how it operates. I have also given only a minute sampling of it. It shares with all human thought and language the distinction of being mythical in character. The question is does it correspond with other things we have come to accept as proximately true? If it does, it is a useful tool for looking

³⁹Cobb and Griffin, p.48.

at the mission of the Church to the world and at citizen participation in decision making.

Its usefulness for looking at citizen participation in decision making is that the very building blocks of the universe are characterized as having an element of free choice in how they are to become conerescent or actual. This freedom increases with the complexity of the societies of actual entities. Why reduce that freedom once the complexity exceeds individual human beings? This view of the nature of things is a powerful statement in support of the democratic concept that all political power originates with the people. It also, however, supports the idea that human societies take on a spiritual life of their own that is greater than the sum of the individual human beings spiritual lives that make them up. This implies that societies have rights and responsibilities that transcend those of their individual members and they need decision making processes appropriate to those rights and responsibilities. The natural order described by Whitehead is a supreme example of this, however, and we would do well to emulate the way it appears God has chosen to resolve this issue. Complex societies of actual entities such as human beings are made up of billions of such entities that go on their merry way making innumerable decisions with the complex society, which is the individual human being, giving little conscious thought to those decisions unless something starts going wrong. In practise this is the way human societies operate in even the

worst dictatorships. Only madmen consciously take on more decision making responsibilities than they need to. It is just that in our time of rapidly increasing social complexity there are unthinking, sometimes power hungry, individuals and groups who are taking far more of the decision making to themselves than is necessary or healthy for their societies. This is dangerous and undesirable for a variety of reasons, two of which are: It allows conscious or unconscious use of such power to enrich one's social class at the expense of the people at large and it robs the people of their right to hold their heads high as self-actualizing human beings participating in decisions that control their own destinies. The result is oppression. Therefore, the people must take back their decision making powers which circumstances have taken from them.

The usefulness of Whitehead's and Griffin's views for the mission of the Church to the world is that as Christ's body, it must work as God works through God's consequent nature to redeem the world. The essence of this work is suffering involvement in all the world's realities serving as the lure to the world to ever reach higher in its attainments toward the highest possibilities. In doing this we will use all the best tools available to us at any point in time remembering that all knowledge and technology are part of God's might saving acts on behalf of the world.

It is God's will that all people, everywhere, be freed from oppression. Oppression comes in many forms. It

is easiest to see in its naked, brutal forms at the hands of tyrants or when people are diseased and starving in the midst of plenty. Usually, oppression is much more subtle. We have seen that people cannot grow to their full possibilities without safe, secure environments that at the same time provide challenge. We have also seen that one of the necessary conditions for people to grow is a measure of control over their own lives.

Griffin, in writing about liberation theology, distinguished between three basic types of intrinsic value, with "intrinsic value" being defined as "anything that is experienced as enjoyable and fulfilling."⁴⁰

The first are receptive values which are values experienced "mainly from the reception of values flowing in from the environment."

Examples are the enjoyment of food and drink, of a comfortable chair, of a warm fire on a cold night, of a massage, and the experience of a healthily-functioning body Also included would be the feeling of being loved. Sexual enjoyment would also fit at least partially under this category, although it usually involves all the other values too⁴¹

The second are "achievement or self-actualizing values" which "require active exertion to be enjoyed". Examples are the enjoyment coming "from solving a problem,

⁴⁰David Ray Griffin, "Values, Evil, and Liberation Theology", unpublished Manuscript prepared for an "Encounter of Theologies" held October 7-10, 1977, at the Seminario Bautista de Mexico in Mexico City.

⁴¹Ibid.

writing a book or a symphony that conforms to the ideals we honor . . . playing the piano, playing tennis, singing, public speaking, running the mile, skiing, mountain climbing The enjoyment comes as much from the activity - from the free, creative actualization of the self's capacities - as from the final achievement. Referring to them as both "self-actualizing" and "achievement" values brings out both dimensions of the experience.⁴²

The third kind . . . (are) contributory values. Here the value comes from the anticipation that your present activity is going to contribute positive value to other experiences. Examples are gaining a knowledge or skill that will help one attain future receptive or achievement values; a father enjoying the idea present efforts will help his children in the future; and a statesman enjoying taking action that will benefit the future of mankind.

. . . All three types of values are essential to any truly human life, and hence of course to human fulfillment

There is a sense in which the receptive values are more basic than the active values. A certain number are essential to life itself. Without sufficient nutrition, warmth, and sometimes medicine, a person will simply die. So there is a sense in which liberation from poverty must come first on the agenda of any liberation movement The set of personal liberties often presupposed by wealthier countries to be the basic human values could be dismissed as a luxury, at best a secondary value, to be talked about when the truly fundamental value had been secured.⁴³

But this is not at all what one finds in the liberation theologies. Rather, the primary stress is on the active values. Paulo Freire emphasizes that people are "authentic" only when engaged in inquiry and creative transformation; and that people must be subjects - they cannot be "liberated" as objects.

⁴²Ibid. ⁴³Ibid.

Enrique Dussel speaks of sin as making the other merely an instrument, whereas love is allowing the other to be free. Gustavo Gutierrez stresses the fundamental aspiration of his people to be artisans of their own destiny. Ruben Alves, defining human being as Homo Creator, says the real problem with oppressed people is not their lack of things, but their lack of power to decide their own destiny and to create history - what I have called achievement and contributory values. He says that we are not truly human if we find happiness simply in what is given - what I have called receptive values. Our most profound intention, Alves says, is the will to be creative - as opposed simply to having pleasant experiences. Because we are essentially creative, humanization cannot be given to us by others, for example by economic planners from another country: humanization comes only as we create our own future. There is no denial by any of these authors, of course, that poverty is bad: but the worst problem is that it is imposed.

. . . . It belongs to our very essence that we be creative. If that creativity is thwarted, whether by lack of receptive values or by lack of freedom to express ourselves, to achieve our self-selected ideals, and to make a difference in the world, we cannot experience a sense of wholeness and fulfillment.

Thus, some of the liberation theologians and other theorists add their support to the need for expanded citizen participation in decision making affecting their lives. This seems to be at the heart of most of the liberation movements of our time including women's liberation.

Some church people reading this may be troubled by my not lifting up the importance of converting individuals to belief in Christ leading to formal membership in the Church. I do not wish to imply that this is not important. It obviously is extremely important for the Church needs committed people in great numbers to carry out its mission to the world. But let us not make the mistake that has too often

been made in the past of thinking that conversion of individuals is the primary reason for the Church's existence and is its primary mission to the world. The main thing conversion does is give the Church more recruits for its mission to the world.

Over many centuries Christians have tried to win the whole world to Christ and his Church. Obviously God has chosen not to honor our efforts! Perhaps we should have listened more intently when Jesus said, "Many are called, few are chosen."⁴⁴ He compared his followers to salt.⁴⁵ Too much salt spoils the whole!

The rain falls on the just and the unjust alike.⁴⁶

God's salvation has political, cultural and economic as well as individual dimensions. God's salvation is for the whole world whether the world responds as we think it should or not.⁴⁷ Our task is to accept our role as salt or leaven and continue Jesus' work of reconciling the world, its social structures as well as its individuals, to God. Our task is to lure the world into accepting God's saving gifts. Such acceptance could usher in a golden era of abundance and freedom in the here and now as the world responds to God's

⁴⁴Matthew 22:14.

⁴⁵Matthew 5:13.

⁴⁶Matthew 5:45.

⁴⁷John 3:16,17; Romans 5:18,19.

upward lure.⁴⁸ We already have much of the knowledge and technology to make this happen. We have not yet developed the political and socio-cultural mechanisms to free that knowledge and technology for God's purposes. It is time for us to catalyze the development of these mechanisms. One can call this political evangelism as Richard Mouw does when he commends political evangelism as an attempt "to see political action as an aspect of the evangelistic task of the Church".⁴⁹

The Church has more than enough "troops" at its disposal to fulfill its mission many times over within one generation if it could get most of them to act. Christians control most of the world's resources and much of its knowledge and technology. They control some of the most powerful and advanced nations on earth. Even a properly organized remnant of these Christians could "turn the world upside down for Christ" in a generation if they would.

Dialogical Community Action is one potential organizing tool among the many we must use if we are to accomplish that task.

A generation may be all we have according to some ex-

⁴⁸One caution is not to identify this with God's Kingdom since that is a consummation at the end of history. All we can expect in the here and now is "Kingdom Bits", to use a term coined by John Vincent. "Kingdom Bits" are serendipitous in character. We cannot plan them. In fact, we only recognize them in retrospect after they are gone.

⁴⁹Richard Mouw, Political Evangelism (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973).

perts before the day of the Lord turns to darkness and not light for our present civilization. Humankind's unlimited possibilities carry equal risks of almost total annihilation. We are like the children of Israel standing on the edge of the promised land. Most of us are not going to make it unless we make a supreme effort very soon to break through the political and social barriers that block us from going into the Promised Land.

The call to the Church in this time of world-wide crisis is to act now to fulfill its mission to the world. Even a remnant can carry the day if it will totally commit itself to the task with all the means at its disposal.

We should not care what people call it when victories are achieved. We should be more interested in action rather than in words or labels.

What we want is for the world to respond to God's lure in this time of multiple, world threatening crises - and be saved!

A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ACTION AS IT RELATES TO CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

My theology of Christian social action, then, as it relates to citizen participation in decision making, is Jesus framed his ministry in both action and word to free the world's people from all kinds of oppression. As Christians we are members of his body, the Church, under Jesus' command to continue his ministry to the world. In fulfilling

this ministry we must tap all of God's saving gifts including the gifts of Holy Scripture, other knowledge, science and technology. These provide evidence that human beings in healthy environments can ascend to great levels of self-actualization and freedom from oppression. One of the prime conditions for healthy environments is freedom for people to exert significant control over their own destinies as individuals and groups. Such freedom should usher in a great surge toward the "new heavens and new earth" or Chardin's omega point. At the same time it will provide built-in cushions against the greater evils that will accompany the surge forward to greater potential for good since greatly expanded citizen participation in decision making demands significant decentralization of power, making it more difficult for evil to hold sway through the power of a few people.

The church and individual Christians should continue witnessing to universal values but should also create and support particular processes in here and now situations that will maximize individual and small group control over decisions affecting their lives. If we do these things we can trust the results issuing from the processes.

Cobb cites Wieman as believing "Value is increased only when men commit themselves to that process which increases it and abandon the effort to manipulate events toward idealized ends."⁵⁰

⁵⁰ John B. Cobb, Jr., Living Options In Protestant Theology (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p.107.

It is our responsibility to be faithful servants of God by being involved in the processes but leaving the results to God.

CHAPTER VII
ORGANIZING THE CHURCH FOR DIALOGICAL
COMMUNITY ACTION

The Church has no higher calling than to proclaim liberation from all kinds of bondage to oppressed humankind. We cannot, however, liberate others. They must liberate themselves. Therefore, our task as Church people is to be catalysts who will set the processes of liberation in motion and support them to complete fruition.

This means solidarity with the oppressed in taking back their power to participate in decisions affecting their lives. It means supporting citizen participation in decision making such as is described in this Project.

Citizen participation in decision making is in many ways a spontaneous movement that cannot be programmed and controlled. If it were so controlled, it would not be citizen participation! So, all we can do is dedicate ourselves to the processes that enable citizen participation in decision making trusting that the products of those processes will generally be right. This makes the Church's role of catalyst all the more important.

Most church people will need considerable change in their ideas about what the Church is and about how it fulfills its purpose. Many people have expressed their frustration with the Church as it is. The European experience of abandonment of much of the institutional Church is beginning to

be repeated in the United States as some of the old line denominations experience large losses in membership and attendance. Discussions I have had with pastors and lay people reveal many of them are frustrated and dissatisfied with things as they are in the Church. They feel much of what they are doing is self-centered and designed for institutional survival rather than service to the world around them. However, they have inherited resources and programs that tend to lock them into these responses. Properties must be maintained and mortgages paid off so we maintain self-serving programs that keep enough people coming to at least pay the bills. We assuage our conscience by letting community groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous and the Boy Scouts use our expensive facilities. Otherwise, we often operate as private social clubs and turn our pastors into highly educated "social directors". The most respected churches are the most successful social clubs that "always have something going" for their members. They attract enough financing to employ associate (or assistant) "social directors" who can help produce a better "show" for their members. If they are really good choreographers, they produce "holy chills" up and down peoples' spines on a regular enough basis to make people feel something is really happening in their local church.

Where is the servant Church in all this? Where is the Church that sees its purpose as serving the world outside its institutional boundaries?

The laity settle for self-serving Churches because no one has shown them a realistic, better way to go. They have come to equate the successful Church with the self-serving Church. However, my experiences in and out of the institutional Church lead me to believe that the laity is usually only going through the motions of support for the religious social club approach to church work. Many are aching to be relevant to the world's needs and problems, but no one has shown them how.

Professional church leaders are the key to changing this situation. Some share the laity's malaise but seem too tired or timid to change. Many probably share their laymen's ignorance about how to take the needed action. However, most professional church leaders are well educated people who should know how to find needed answers. There is a growing body of information on how to organize for effective action on various kinds of human needs. With a little effort, this information can be secured. Basic to all such action is action as described in this Project to empower people to take more control over their own destinies.

The Church's professional leadership must become familiar with group and community organization theory and techniques. Since the essence of pastoral work is to work with groupings of people, pastors and their professional associates must know how to organize and facilitate such groups. Additionally, since the Church's mission is to serve the world, pastors must know how to effectively

organize and facilitate community efforts.

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES ARE NEEDED
FOR THE CHURCH TO FULFILL ITS
MISSION TO THE WORLD

The change in our churches will take place as they organize themselves to serve the world. Instead of most of their energies being directed inward toward their own interests, they will be directed into serving the world beyond their boundaries. Pastors can facilitate this change by how they execute their leadership. If they adopt as their primary role the role of organizer/facilitator of group and community action, it will gradually change the direction of the whole church. Preaching, counseling, teaching, socializing, administration, performance of sacramental and worship duties would all take their direction from this organizer/facilitator role and would undergird it. In turn this could empower the laity of the church to grow into a new kind of service to the world.

The temptation and pressures on the professional church leader to lapse into the social director role will always be great particularly for those who are not comfortable with others assuming responsibility. However, those committed to the role of organizer/facilitator will get someone else to do "social director" types of things in the Church including much of what passes for pastoral counseling and home visitation of the members. If the laity feel strongly that a new, social club style program needs to be mounted,

the wise organizer/facilitator/pastor will help the lay people do it themselves. (S)he cannot afford to tie up limited energies and time in self-centered institutional activities. The pastor cannot be a church's flunky if that church is ever to achieve greatness in its service to the world. (S)he must be more like a skillful chief executive who is the catalyst for getting things done.

This does not mean churches will cease to be religious social clubs even with skillful organizer/facilitator pastors dedicated to service to the world outside the institutional boundaries of the Church. Pastors should not dictate to their members how the members will fulfill their ministries though they surely should witness by word and deed about what they think the church should do. Pastors must dedicate themselves to proper organizational facilitating processes within the Church just as they do in the world outside the Church. Some members will surely choose to continue serving their religious social clubs. Others will choose to follow their organizer/facilitator/pastors' example.

It is not up to God's servants to dictate ends. It is only incumbent on them to use proper means or processes. The ends belong to God and God chooses such ends as God pleases! However, with a pastor filling the proper role as organizer/facilitator urging his/her church into service to the world, the church that is a religious social club will not remain such in comfort. Gradually, its focus will change

and more and more people may respond to the call to serve the world.

The conflict potential of such change would be lessened considerably by the Church adopting growth enabling processes for individuals, their families and their communities. The church should be so structured that this growth will be nurtured in a continuum that begins with the youngest child, extends through all its constituents into the local community and, ultimately, around the world.

CHURCH PEOPLE SHOULD BE "GOD'S SABOTEURS"
IN THE WORLD LURING THE WORLD TO ITS
HIGHEST POSSIBILITIES

Study-action groups will be at the heart of the organizational structure of any such Church. These groups should operate as modified therapy groups for the triple purposes of personal growth, study and action.

Howard Clinebell, in his book Growth Counseling, says,

"Growth Counseling regards GENERATIVITY AND OUTREACH as essential to the continuing growth of a person or a relationship. Growth pursued for its own sake becomes a cul-du-sac. The way to keep growing is to give your growth away. Thus, every growth group should also be a training for action and outreach group. This is the conceptual and psychological bridge between personal growth and social action."¹

Once a growth group has developed to the point where its individuals have grown to trust each other and are ready

¹Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Growth Counseling (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979), p.77.

to move into action, they should covenant together about their witness to the world. They should analyze their community's structures and organizations to see where they can effectively serve as "God's saboteurs" to lure it to greater possibilities. They then should agree who will do what and hold each other responsible, at regular group meetings, for their witness.

To optimize its mission in its community, a church in service to the world should sponsor a dialogical community action process such as is described in chapter five of this Project. It would provide an effective organizing tool to move the congregation into action as well as provide an informational base for further action. Once the information was developed the main task would be to prioritize the many areas needing action.

When a church decides to take action, one of the first needs that will develop is the need for information about who has what kind of talents and interests. Therefore, a talent and interest survey should be conducted among its constituents. Ideally, all the churches of a synod, district, conference, etc., should conduct such a survey and submit the results to a central data bank for retrieval when searching for a particular skill. This would vastly expand the ability of the Church to take responsible action in situations requiring expert know how. Denominations could pool their talent banks for ecumenical action resulting in an even larger pool of talent.

Denominations should organize from the local church on up through their regional, state, national and international bodies to act as catalysts at every level of decision-making. This would be a valuable antidote to the parochialism inherent in citizen participation. Dialogical communication should characterize such activity both within the denomination, between local and higher levels of the church and with the world to whom the action is directed. To maximize the impact of such action, denominations should consult with each other and engage in joint, ecumenical action wherever possible at all levels of the Church including the local Church.

The style of action at all levels of the church in its relations with the world should be that of a sympathetic critic dedicated to processes that will lure the world higher and higher towards its possibilities.

The rest of the church's activities should take their orders from this primary mission. We will continue to worship, recruit new members, counsel the distressed, educate our constituents, marry and bury, engage in fellowship activities, and even build new edifices. However, all these should serve our primary mission of ministering to the world through praxis evangelism. If church activities do not serve that mission they should be changed or eliminated.

The Church in service to the world will assume many different forms. This is in the spirit of Saint Paul who said,

" . . . I have become everything in turn to men of every sort, so that in one way or another I may save some."²

Sometimes it takes the form of The Urban Industrial Mission of Sheffield, England which started as the communal venture of a few committed disciples in the heart of some of England's worst slums. Social action on behalf of the slums' residents is coupled with conscious discipleship in a communal setting where the core residents live, worship, study and act together. Sometimes it will appear so worldly that the world does not recognize it as the Church. John Vincent describes this, as I noted earlier in this Project, as follows:

" . . . The world can only be won to its own redemption by a trick or by the disciple himself being so worldly that the world mistakes him for itself, and finds itself following his way of humanness, vocation, identification with the needy, acted parables and secret discipline for others, and thus willy nilly, encountering the living techniques which are its own salvation. All the disciple has to do is to be content to be the unilateral initiator, the vicarious savior, the experimental guinea pig, the Christ who perishes in every age for those who have no imagination."³

Where the Church can start fresh its organization will probably be much different from that found in situations inherited from prior generations. All forms are needed, however, and none should be considered superior or inferior to the others except as judged by how a particular form

²I Corinthians 9:22 (NEB).

³John Vincent, The Jesus Thing (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1973), p.79.

facilitates ministries to the world.

From all forms of the Church, from all its denominations, should pour a mighty army of "God's saboteurs" infiltrating all sectors of the world thereby leavening all the world's activities. To do this, they need expert organizer/facilitator/professional church leaders who are also expert growth facilitators. They need their own organizational structure to provide the support of those of little faith; to provide a setting for reflection, planning and training; and to provide mechanisms for united action. This implies the forms the Church takes in particular situations will follow the needs of God's saboteurs in those situations.

Whatever form of the Church is used, Dialogical Community Action can be used to organize the Church's service to the world.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

Planet Earth is vibrant with both its possibilities and potential catastrophes. Scientific advancement has opened up possibilities never dreamed of by our forebears. It has also brought humankind face to face with its own possible extinction. The way humankind responds to these gifts of God determines whether humankind experiences them as darkness or light.

God is constantly luring creation to its highest possibilities and redeeming it with suffering involvement, as symbolized by the cross, when it falls short. God revealed God's basic nature in Jesus Christ and created the Church to continue Christ's ministry following Christ's glorification. That ministry is essentially a ministry to the world luring it to its highest possibilities. The Church participates with God in God's luring, suffering involvement with creation. Since God works in serendipitous ways to perform God's wonders, it is the Church's responsibility to dedicate itself to means that God can use to perform those wonders. God writes the agenda as we go along. It is the Church's role to facilitate that agenda, to follow where God leads, to go with the flow of events.

One important means to empowering humankind so it can respond at a higher level to God's lure is the maximum feasible citizen participation in decision making. People

will usually choose life and not death when they have the power to make and implement decisions affecting their own lives. An excellent tool to empower citizen participation in decision making is Dialogical Community Action. The Church should reorganize its organizational structure to focus its energy on such world service.

The time has come for the Church to rediscover its primary mission of world service. God has placed her here for this critical time and place. May she be equal to the task in such a way that her service will lure the world to responses that will make light and not darkness of God's mighty visitations.

Our choice is the same as was Israel's so many centuries ago. It is between life and death for our planet.

May we choose life!

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